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RATIONALISM AND POPERY REFUTED:

THREE DISCOURSES

ON

THE AUTHORITY OF THE SCRIPTURES.

BY

J. H. MERLE D'AUBIGNE, D.D.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH, WITH A PREFACE,

BY THE

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

FOR three centuries and more, the “theological city” of Geneva has exerted a remarkable influence over the religious mind of Europe, and the world; and small as the canton is among the nations of the earth, its power for good is not yet exhausted. On the contrary, by means of some of those who at present labour there, Geneva is still acting as a bulwark against error in many lands; for France, Switzerland, Belgium, and other countries, have all come under its influence. Even Italy has felt the benefits of proximity to the city of Calvin, and light has radiated from the little Swiss canton to illuminate some hidden ones in that lovely but most degraded country.

As of old, then, so in our day, Geneva stands in the forefront of those who contend for the neglected interests of eternity against the overmastering claims of time; and though the struggle sometimes appears, to human eyes, not to promise speedy success, the banner

of truth is still displayed in such a way as to glorify its Author, and repel the aggressions of its enemies. The following Discourses relate to one of these struggles.

Their history may be easily told. It is contained in the following letter, dated early in 1850, from Count St George, a distinguished member of the Evangelical Society of Geneva :—“The Theological Seminary,” he writes, “has just undergone a painful trial. One of the professors, M. E. Scherer, D.D., has declared to the Board of Directors that a gradual, but thorough change, has taken place in his views upon the authenticity, inspiration, and canonical character of the Holy Scriptures ; and that, as he no longer agreed with the well-known principles of the Society, he resigned his professorship.

. . . . It was with deep sorrow that the Committee of the Evangelical Society listened to this communication ; but, although M. Scherer declared that he still retained his belief in all the facts contained in the Bible, and in all the doctrines which together constitute the evangelical faith, with the exception of the inspiration and authority of the Holy Scriptures, the Committee, apprehending that this doctrine overthrows the very foundations of the Christian religion, believed it to be their duty unanimously, and without hesitation, to accept his resignation.”

Dr Scherer, it will be here observed, has adopted opinions which are, in truth, subversive of all revela-

tion. It appears that he holds that the inspiration of the sacred writers does not differ, in its nature, from that which every believer may enjoy, and that all true Christians are inspired according to their attainments in holiness. He believes that the Scriptures are inspired only in so far as they teach religious doctrines; all else is to be assigned to the writers—not to God. He further holds, that some books of the Bible are not divine, and that, though they are now included in the canon, they should not occupy that rank. Moreover, he holds that the spiritual man is the judge of the whole volume which the churches deem inspired; in other words, man becomes a standard to the Bible, not the Bible a standard to man. According to the views of Dr Scherer, “Biblicism is a theological error, and a source of injury to the church;” and he proposes to substitute Individualism for Biblicism; that is, to make the experience, and the inner light of every believer, the basis of faith, while he rejects inspiration as a “cabalistic ventriloquism,” and would substitute the “noble utterance of the human voice” for “the Word of the Lord which endureth for ever.” *

It will at once be seen, that these opinions involve the very essence of Rationalism, and can find their complement or necessary results only in Infidelity. In different ages of the church, the truth has had to contend with

* See *Evangelical Christendom*, vol. iv. p. 82.

different enemies, singly or combined. In the first ages, the truth of God was combated as the dictate of Satanic power, and as upheld by Satanic agency. Celsus, Porphyry, and others, brought the science and learning of their age to the defence of that opinion. When that failed to check or to crush what is divine and charged with omnipotence, other enemies arose; and the truth which could not be extinguished began to be corrupted. Essenism, Gnosticism, Eerimitism—all fortified by heresies as numerous and diversified as a perverse ingenuity could devise—arose to limit what the only wise God designed should circulate round the globe. In the train of other corrupting influences, Mahomet arose, and created an enormous diversion in favour of error. Then slowly and stealthily Popery was growing up. It spread till it had overshadowed or nearly extinguished the truth;—and perhaps one of the clearest proofs that the religion of the Bible is the religion of God, is found in the fact, that it survived all these attacks, or rather emerged at length from them all, invested with fresh vigour, like Lazarus from his tomb, at the Redeemer's command.

The Reformation was the result of truth restored to man. The student of the history of that period, however, cannot but trace the influence of certain counter-active agencies, which began at a very early stage of the deliverance from Popish oppression. The human

mind, once emancipated, rushed forward, in too many cases, to adopt extreme opinions. It hurried from a state of slavery, not merely to liberty, but to licentiousness ; and this led to a reaction which ended in the abandonment of much that the Reformation had seemed to secure. In the lapse of time, men like Grotius and Leclerc arose, with their chilling criticisms and their semi-socian theology, to weaken what still remained of the truth, as far as man could succeed in such an effort, and helped to spread darkness, like a pall, again over all the churches of the Reformation. They laid the foundations of Rationalism, and taught men how to trifle with the Word of the Eternal God.

But the curve in which the human mind, when viewed historically, moves, was described—the cycle had revolved; and as the soul abhors a vacuum, that void which had been created by the cold and lifeless theology of part of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, began to be filled up by more positive or life-giving beliefs. Arndt, Franke, and their fellow-labourers, arose to unfold the religion of the Bible again, and to exemplify the power of truth in the heart and life of man. The enemy of that truth, however, was awake, as well as its friends, and new tares began to be sown. It was manifest that the religion of God could not be crushed, but it could be corrupted, as of old ; and that was the policy which continued to be employed by him who was “ a liar from

the beginning." Neology, Rationalism, and all the learned ignorance of Germany, and other lands, were now carried to their highest point; and upon any other topic than religion, it would be amusing to see how men sported with revelation, or moulded it into theories, like Strauss, Paulus, and a host besides ; rejecting, adding, mutilating, changing, criticising, contradicting, or adopting—all according to their own prurient fancies. Even such men as Tholuck, Nitzsch, and Neander, are not entirely free from this charge, much as the churches owe to their labours and their measure of light.

But, in our day the truth is not called to contend with only a single assailant, or, if with only one, his name is Legion. Infidelity, Popery, and a modified Rationalism, are now the triple antagonists with which the Word of God has to struggle. Of the first of these, we need furnish no specimens. It is known and read of all men as bent on sweeping away the entire disclosure of God's mind to man, and leaving him to his own resources—that is, to the blackness of darkness without hope for ever. But Popery is in this work the ally of Infidelity ; and even in this land it has at length boldly and openly asserted, that, as regards the Word of the Eternal God, Romanists may assume in their discussions that the Word of God is an unproved book. The following quotations will show the bitter spirit of antagonism to

Scripture, avowed not merely at Rome, or under the shelter of the Inquisition, but in this land of light and of the Scriptures.

In a recent conference regarding a conversion to Popery, a minister of Christ referred to the Word of God in proof of his position; and was the reference allowed? On the contrary, his Papal opponent, in the convent of St Margaret's, near Edinburgh, said, "It would be allowing him an unfair advantage to permit him to argue at all from the words of Scripture, until he had proved it to be the Word of God, which I (the priest) asserted it was impossible for him to do on any but (Roman) Catholic grounds; and that I was hence entitled to ask him, as if I had been an Infidel, to prove, in the first instance, the divine inspiration of the Scriptures." In other words, the advocates of the Papacy calmly and unblushingly tell us, that they will argue us out of the Scriptures, "as if they were Infidels."

But further, to make room for an infallible head to his church, the Romish advocate more at length takes up the very position of the Infidel. "The Infallible Witness," he says, "is not a book, which can carry with it no authority, until I am satisfied that it is divinely inspired, faithfully translated, and that I understand its true sense—questions replete with difficulties for the most learned, and impossible of solution for nine-tenths of the human race." In other words, God

has not succeeded in making his meaning plain. He who spake as never man did, requires to be illustrated or authenticated by modern Romanists. His words are not true when he says, “If any man will do the will of my heavenly Father, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God.” His servant was in error when he wrote, “Hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.”

Besides these two antagonists of God’s truth, Infidelity and Popery, we have mentioned a third, Rationalism or Germanism ; and that form of unbelief, after having sapped the foundations of religion on the continent, is at length influencing the religion of our island, in no measured degree. The following extracts will exhibit its antagonism to the truth of God :—

Bibliolatry is “the British form of idolatry,” according to F. W. Newman, in his work “The Soul and her Sorrows.” “Among ourselves,” he says, “Bibliolatry makes pretensions so haughty, of being alone pure, alone pious, alone spiritual, alone infallible, that I feel it a duty to encounter the pain of exposing the erroneous foundations of men, many of whom, as individuals, I honour, esteem, and love, as the excellent of the earth.” He calls what he stigmatizes as the worship of the Bible “modern heathenism,” and tells us that “what God reveals to us, he reveals within, through the medium of our moral and spiritual senses.” God may have

magnified his Word above all his name—prophets, apostles, nay, the Son of God himself may have appealed to it as the final arbiter; but this author, in the genuine spirit of the Infidel or the Romanist, disowns its supremacy as the “modern heathenism,” fit only to be repudiated by man.

But these errors thrive luxuriantly in the hearts of men, even in our sober land. What Mr F. W. Newman enounces with some caution, Ralph Waldo Emerson puts forth with singular boldness. He asserts that “our colossal theologies of Judaism, Christism, Buddhism, Mahometism, are the necessary and structural action of the human mind.” That is, he places the truth of God in the same class with the grossness of heathenism, as a product of man’s mind; and thus by implication he discards or offensively degrades the revelation of the mind of God. This reckless author speaks as if man himself knew all that can purify or ennable the soul. The inner light is what he glories in; and all who know the simple meaning of the Word of God, may see that he and thousands in our day have made a god of self—the Hegelian *ME*—and have bowed down to worship a thing so very degraded.

It is to this class, advocating the Rationalistic phase of Infidelity, that Dr Scherer’s opinions belong; and against them, in that character, Dr M. D’Aubigné reasons with great tact, and power, and conclusiveness, in the Dis-

courses which are here translated. They are now laid before the public—and especially the young, and the intelligent, but inexperienced—as an antidote to the unspeakable crudities of the Rationalistic school. D'Aubigné's discourses appear to us a model for all controversialists. Without one particle of acrimony towards the erring—nay, with a large-hearted affection for them—he is yet strenuous and uncompromising in defence of the truth. The author clearly sees that it is not a controversy regarding some secondary point, some mere shade of difference, that has been raised. On the contrary, it touches all that is vital and essential in truth. Have we a revelation, or have we not? Is God's mind known to man, or is it not? Does the Spirit of God teach, or have we only the suggestions of our own souls—the inner light—the inspiration which springs from earth instead of coming from above? These are the questions which are disposed of here by a master in Israel—a divine, as large and liberal in his views, as he is genial in his affections. The mind of antiquity, the testimony of the men whom God has most signally honoured in his church, and the light which history throws upon the question which the author discusses, are all brought to bear upon the subject; and, could our words reach the candidates for the ministry in this island, we should ask them, every one apart, to read, mark, and inwardly digest the facts and arguments of Dr

M. D'Aubigné. They furnish a brief manual for the controversy against Popery, or against spurious Catholicism on the one hand, and spurious Spiritualism on the other. In brief, we think that these Discourses may be read for edification by the devout, for instruction by the student of history, and for arguments by those who would defend the truth against its assailants, whether they are found among Romanists or Neologians.

In no respect are the views of Dr D'Aubigné more clearly brought out, or more satisfactory to the believer in Christ, than as regards the conviction wrought in the mind of the humble inquirer that the Scriptures are from God, by their felt application to the wants and condition of the soul. Again and again he returns to that subject, and his views regarding it—so simple, yet so deep-reaching—stand in instructive contrast with the efforts of Romish Infidelity to show that no one can know the doctrine to be from God without the authority of *the church*. In this point of view, the author's reasoning is a death-blow to the whole Papal system. This, indeed, is what signalizes these Discourses. They put the Scriptures where they should be—the church where it should be—and man where he should be. Historically, logically, and experimentally, the claims of Popery are disproved, and a new breastwork is thrown up against its subtle aggress-

sions. It is in this point of view that we earnestly commend this little volume to the study of the friends of truth. A fine equipoise is preserved between the objective and the subjective in religion ; and were the minds of men deeply imbued with the truths and principles which are contained in these Discourses, our fears for the Church's future might be fewer than they are.

W. K. T.

EDINBURGH, *February 1851.*

* * * Regarding the translation, it may be said, that, owing to the idiomatic, and sometimes almost colloquial, style of portions of the Discourses, it was not easy to render some passages so literally as has been aimed at throughout.

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PREFACE.

WITHOUT wishing to exaggerate the importance of the transactions to which these Discourses relate, one may yet venture to say, that they already hold a place in the history of French Protestantism. It is that which induces me to publish, as documents, these leaves, prepared for a limited auditory, and which, without that consideration, I would certainly have hesitated to submit to a more extended public through the press. I have desired to fulfil a duty, in making known my opinion upon what I regard as a cardinal point in the discussion—the divine authority of Scripture ; but, I do not believe that I am called upon to throw myself into the whole range of the controversy.

These Discourses are essentially a testimony rendered by a Christian to the Scriptures which he loves—in which he has a confidence full of veneration—and which he believes it his duty to obey. It is as a testimony that I publish them. If it be necessary to confess Christ, it is necessary also to confess his Word.

As to the date of this publication, that has been determined by the rule which I proposed to myself—namely, not to take the first step in this affair, without also, if I saw it to be my duty, taking the second. Thus,

though I had been asked to speak on the authority of the Scriptures, in some public meetings, immediately after this question had become the object of general attention in Geneva, I refused. But, when a public course of instruction had been commenced upon this subject, in a sense opposed to mine, I believed it to be my duty also to devote one or two meetings to the matter. I stopt there, however, and did not consent to print the Discourses which I had delivered. A letter, which had been addressed to me in November, having, since that time, been published in the *Courant* of June, with another letter to a friend, I think it proper to enter now upon the path which has thus been cleared for me by an honourable adversary,—one whom it had been far more pleasant for me to address as a colleague and a friend.

But I have no design to enter farther into the subject. Of all the professors in the Theological Seminary, I am the one in whose department such discussions are most out of place, seeing that my sphere is historical and practical theology. They belong rather to the province of my colleagues who are charged with critical, exegetical, and dogmatic divinity. Farther, except in extraordinary circumstances, I will not resume my pen upon this subject; I have other works to finish, of which the responsibility presses heavily upon me.

The first two Discourses were delivered on Sabbaths the 17th and 24th of March, in some special services of the Evangelical Church of Geneva; the third on the 26th of June, in the General Assembly of the Evangelical Society, where the author was called to preside.

May God employ them to confirm some of his children!

GENEVA, July 1850.

P.S.—About a month after having written these lines, on my return from a journey among the mountains of Switzerland, I read in the *Revue de Theologie*, p. 55, an allegation, signed Edmond Scherer, concerning the delay which has occurred in the publication of these Discourses, which appears to me to be scarcely amiable, and which, consequently, does not remind me of my former colleague. I have no right to expect any thing from his fellow-labourers, to whom I am almost a stranger; but, from him I do expect something. The most mournful results of our controversies are those chillings of affection which they occasion. May God preserve us from these in the present! As far as I am concerned, I cannot pledge myself that no rash word shall involuntarily escape from me :—“ If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man.” But, what I can say is, that I love the person of him whom we have lost, and esteem his character, even while deplored his errors. I hope that the heat of controversy will not disturb this true affection. If we love only those with whom we are in harmony, what thank have we?

August.

THE
AUTHORITY OF THE SCRIPTURES.

DISCOURSE I.

THE TESTIMONY OF GOD.

MY BRETHREN,—As the basis of this discourse, we shall submit three sayings of the Lord, which are quoted in the fourth chapter of the Gospel of Matthew :—

The first saying you read in the fourth verse, in these words—“*It is written.*”

The second saying you read in the seventh verse, in these words—“*It is written.*”

The third saying you read in the tenth verse, in these words—“*It is written.*”

The Lord is coming from being baptized ; the heavens are opened ; the Spirit of God has come upon him ; a voice has said—“This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased ;” his ministry is about to commence—he is led by the Spirit into the wilderness—he is there tempted by the devil. The church should be attentive to the manner in which her Divine Chief is going to repel the enemy. What is the first weapon which we must employ in our struggles with the adversary? The Lord

replies—*The Scripture.* Do we return to the charge, and ask, What is the second? *The Scripture.* And the third? The Lord will reply—*The Scripture.*

When we are called to combat an error, two dangers present themselves. The first is, not to have sufficient love for those who are deceived; the second, not to have sufficient decision against the error. I pray God to preserve me from both of these. There are some true and profound affections which resist even violent storms; they lie in the depths of the heart, and will never rise up from thence. For some time I have not ceased to feel that it is so.

But, on the other hand, when the foundation of the faith of Christians is attacked—when young spirits, of whom the church loved to cherish pleasant hopes, fall into the snare, allured by that novelty which has so many charms at twenty-one, and, alas! block up with their own hands the entry to their career, at the moment when they are about to commence it—when one beholds doctrines spreading, directly opposed to those which the Lord of Glory—He who brought truth to the earth—has taught, how can such things permit us to be mute? “Ah!” said Calvin, within these very walls of Geneva, “a dog bays loudly when any one attacks his master—and shall I be silent when one attacks my Lord and my God?”

Yet, my brethren, I declare that I am not now to occupy myself either with any man, or with any particular teaching. Without doubt, this assembly is for a special purpose; yet my intention is not to contend with my adversaries, but to fortify the hearts of my friends. Do not forget that. The first of these tasks would be

painful—the second is full of pleasure. I am not about to speak to the church as a doctor, but as an elder, to warn the flock, and say to it, with John—The elder to those whom he loves in the truth. Walk in that which you have heard from the beginning. We speak before God, for your edification.

“ If there be any,” said Luther, “ who acknowledge that the evangelical writings are the Word of God himself, we are ever ready to speak with them. But with those who deny that, we will not exchange a word. One should not argue with those who reject first principles—the essential foundations. Even Pagan philosophers have said, ‘ Contra negantem prima principia non esse disputandum.’ ” Thus speaks Luther. I will obey that command.

And in addressing myself to you who are assembled in this chapel, I would recollect, that to present the truth is the best means of preventing error. It may happen that some one may some day pretend that the sun does not give light. That, and alas ! still worse, has been witnessed. But if that assertion were made in presence of men by whom I was asked to prove the contrary, I would take them by the hand—I would conduct them out of the cave, where, by the light of a sepulchral lamp, the strange assertion had been made ; I would show them the sun, “ like a strong man,” says the prophet, “ rejoicing to run his race,” and that would be all my demonstration.

“ Le Nil a vu sur ses rivages
Les noirs habitans des deserts
Insulter, par leur cris sauvages,
L'astre eclatant de l'univers.

Cris impuissants ! fureurs bizarres !
Tandis que ces monstres barbares
Poussaient d'insolentes clamours,
Le Dieu, poursuivant sa carriere,
Versait des torrents de lumiere
Sur ces obscurs blasphemateurs."

We will not act otherwise when we treat of the Word of God.

Attacked in all ages, attacked even now, the Holy Scriptures will continue to be so in the ages to come. But you know the symbol which our fathers loved—an anvil upon which three men caused the strokes of their hammer to fall, and around the anvil was this device—

"Plus a me frapper on s'amuse,
Tant plus de marteaux on y use."

Behold the history of the written Word of God !

Fear not, then ! If you found yourselves some day at the base of Mont Blanc, where that giant of mountains strikes his immovable foundations into the earth, and if you saw some little ants issuing from their hillock, labouring, scraping, picking, running, taking, one a blade of grass, another a grain of sand, would you believe that Mont Blanc was about to be annihilated ? and would you think that other little ants, like us, should make war upon their comrades to prevent our gigantic Alps from crumbling away ? No, certainly. Well ! Combine the efforts of all the men in every place and at all times, who have attacked the Word of God—they have not accomplished more than that. I am wrong. They have accomplished less. The Holy Scripture, when it feels the nibbling of men, does not run even the danger to which Mont Blanc is exposed when an ant attacks it. Jesus Christ has not merely

said, “Mont Blanc shall pass away;” but he has declared, “The earth—the earth with its loftiest mountains—the earth and the heavens shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.”

But if these things be so, why is my mouth opened among you? I have no fear for the Scripture of God, but I do fear for many souls, who are prone to be led into error. I know that when a revival has lasted for a generation—which is the case with ours—we then often see it declining; and that if the servants of the father of a household sleep, the enemy is pleased then to sow tares in the field. I perceive, in the present age, many evil tendencies, in harmony with those novel doctrines which oppose the authority of the Scripture of God. I think that if we wish to uphold the “house of God”—the “holy temple of the Lord”—it is not enough to oppose those who wish to overthrow the walls, but it is necessary, in the very first place, to repel those who desire to remove the very rocks on which the Temple rests. Now, “ye are built,” said Paul, “upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone.”

The divine authority of the Scriptures and their inspiration are two distinct, but inseparable truths. The authority of the Scriptures proceeds from their inspiration, and their inspiration establishes their authority, in the same manner as tempering produces steel, and steel is the result of tempering. If the authority perish, inspiration perishes; if, on the other hand, it be inspiration which is overthrown, the authority also disappears. The Scripture, without inspiration, is a cannon emptied of its charge. But have no fear! The

cannon will not allow itself to be discharged. Doctor Twesten has already remarked, that the authority and the inspiration of the Scriptures are so closely allied, that we cannot speak of one of these doctrines without speaking of the other. “ What we recognise as the inspired exhibition of a divine revelation, we ought also to receive as *the Word of God—Λόγος Θεού.*” *

Thus two methods present themselves to us. There is one mode of establishing the inspiration of the Scriptures ; that is, to prove their divine authority : but there is also another mode of establishing the authority of the Scriptures ; that is, to show their divine inspiration. It is the first of these that I shall follow in these discourses.

Let us see, then, what are the testimonies which we possess in favour of the divine authority of the Scriptures.

These testimonies divide themselves into two classes. The one class comes from God, the other from man ; the one is from heaven, the other from the earth.

I will address to you to-day something concerning the testimony of God, and if the Lord permit, next Lord’s day, concerning the testimony of men. I say *something*, for I do not propose to treat of this subject in all its extent ; and according to my custom, I will view it more especially in an historical light. I shall thus be able to clear up two points of history upon which men have recently fallen into some palpable errors.

If there ever were two important epochs for the Christian Church, and for all humanity, these are, first,

* Twesten, at present Professor at Berlin. (*Dogmatique I.* p. 429.)

the epoch of the origin of Christianity; and, secondly, that of the Reformation. Now, what are the principles of these two epochs, as regards the divine authority of Holy Scripture? It is important for us to know this, and that the more, because it is precisely here that the two errors of which I speak have been committed.

The error into which men have fallen regarding the era of the Reformation, I will tell you, if God permit, next Lord's day. To-day, we have to do only with that error which relates to the commencement of Christianity. Here it is.

The Bible, it has been said, is no longer an authority for the simple-minded believer; the idea of inspiration which constitutes the sacred collection of the New Testament, and which is its dignity, is one of the elements of Catholicism, which was insensibly developed in the ancient church. Men recur to the authority of an inspired volume, as they recur to the authority of the Episcopate, and the magic virtue of the Sacraments. Biblicalism is the scourge of the church.* It appears to have been the necessity of finding an opponent to the Gnostic sect, which led to the invention of the authority of Scripture. Behold the first error!

There is, perhaps, no opinion more strange than that which regards the authority of the Holy Scripture as belonging to Catholicism.

Catholicism, every one knows, consists precisely in

* Such sentiments are becoming rife in our own land. "Biblio-latry is the British form of idolatry—one nation has been educated to believe the infallibility of a book, another of a church." These and similar sentiments are scattered through Newman's work, *The Soul, her Sorrows and her Aspirations*, which forms one of a class the most intensely infidel and deleterious of our day.—TR.

putting the human authority of the church above the divine authority of the Scriptures. To say that it was Catholicism which originated the authority of Scripture, which is contrary to it, is as if one would say that it was the Reformation of the sixteenth century which produced the Papacy.

This error, opposed as it is to the very nature of these institutions, is not less opposed to history. We shall see that next Lord's day, in regard to the testimony of men. To-day I shall present the testimony rendered by God to the authority of Holy Scripture, and rendered long before Catholicism existed. That testimony is two-fold. There is—

- I. The testimony of the Son.
- II. The testimony of the Holy Spirit.

These two testimonies are very different in their nature. The testimony of the Son, being rendered by the Word, is mainly * exterior. The testimony of the Holy Spirit, being rendered by the Spirit, is mainly * internal. But these two testimonies, although distinct, constitute radically only one—they both originate in *the Father*. The Father, whom no one has seen, nor can see, has been manifested on earth, first by the Son, and then by the Holy Spirit. Now, the Father has been pleased to make each of these grand manifestations of his divinity testify on behalf of Scripture.

I begin with the testimony of the Son.

I. I am about to narrate historically to you what the Lord Jesus Christ has taught regarding the divine authority of Scripture.

* *Surtout.* Above all, especially, chiefly, primarily.—TR.

Allow me, first, to remove an objection which some among you will perhaps be disposed to offer. There is a *petitio principii* in your method, some one will say—you move in a vicious circle. You cannot employ the authority of Jesus Christ to prove the authority of Scripture.

I might content myself with one answer to this objection ; but I will produce three, and then proceed with our subject.

Here is the first :—

Some have pretended (as you have heard) that the divine authority of the Scriptures was a doctrine of Catholicism, invented against Gnosticism in the second century. To exhibit the falseness of this assertion, I prove that this doctrine was established from the time of the ministry of our Lord, and by the Son of God himself. Is not that to proceed logically !

Here is the second reply :—

We are endeavouring to ascertain what is the teaching of Christianity as to the authority which a man must admit in order to be a Christian. Well! Where shall I learn the doctrine of Christianity, if it be not in the lessons of Jesus and his apostles ? Do you wish me to ascertain it from Buddha or Socinus ? Observe this well ; a man may not be an evangelical Christian ; I grant to every one the right ; he may be a mystic, a rationalist, a deist, a Roman Catholic, or even a Mohammedan, but he cannot be a disciple of Jesus Christ, except in so far as he receives the lessons of Christ. When did any one ever pretend to be the disciple of him whose instructions he combats ? What ! Tycho Brahe a disciple of Copernicus ? If, then, you, my brethren,

be determined to be disciples of Jesus Christ rather than of Socinus, of the Pope, or of Mohammed, I will tell you what Christ teaches.

Here is my third reply :—

It will not even be necessary for my argument to admit at the outset the divine authority and inspiration of the Scriptures. If you choose, consider the Holy Scripture, in the first instance, simply as an historical testimony. It is evident, even according to a purely historical process, that Jesus Christ and his apostles believed in the divine authority of the Scriptures, and gave their testimony to them. Now, I recognise in Jesus Christ and the apostles witnesses so holy, so truthful, so worthy of confidence, that if I choose to challenge their sayings, I must challenge many other authorities which are universally admitted. There would no longer be for me, in the best accredited documents of history—neither in Cæsar, nor in Comines, nor elsewhere, an historical testimony which had any value. There is not here, then, any *petitio principii*. On the contrary, I proceed as in mathematics. I make use of a granted proposition—namely, the *honesty* of the testimony of Jesus Christ and his apostles—to establish another proposition which flows necessarily from that—namely, the *divinity* of the testimony. There is here geometrical precision. These three remarks being made, let us now proceed:

Faith is the essence of Christianity. We must *believe*, in order to enjoy eternal life. But in order to believe we must have testimony. “How will they believe on him of whom they have not heard?” This is true of every kind of faith. It is only by faith that you know that Cæsar, Alexander, and all the heroes and

nations of antiquity existed ; you have never seen them, but you have for your belief the testimony of annalists and historians. Nay, it is only by testimony that you know that you have elder brothers and sisters, a father and a mother ; it is upon the evidence of these brothers, of that father, of that mother, that you believe it.

With stronger reason still, we need evidence when we treat of things which “ no man hath seen nor can see.”

We need evidence ; for it is not possible to believe when nothing is presented to our faith—as well say that one could eat without having any food—or that one could know a distant country, the Indies or Tahiti, without the testimony of geographers and voyagers. That is not done except in dreams, and dreams do not save. Evidence is the primary matter, without which faith cannot exist.

But, moreover, when it is divine things that we attempt to know by faith, there is need of a testimony which is altogether peculiar. It is not the testimony of men that we need in that case, even though they were *religious heroes*. We know how our fellow-mortals are deceived as regards earthly things, so that we have no desire to trust ourselves to them concerning the things of heaven. We must have a *revelation* which comes from God, and it is necessary that the *setting forth* of that revelation in the Scripture should also come from God. If God has given us a revelation, it is needful that he should make sure that it reach us pure, without blemishes, without error, such as he gave it. Without that, what purpose would it serve to us ?

You know, perhaps, my brethren, that very learned men in our day have pretended, right or wrong, that

the celebrated historians of Rome, Titus Livy, and the rest, were deceived in the writings which they have left us.*

These modern scholars believe, for example, that Romulus and Remus never existed, but are simply a *primitive duality*; and that the rape of the Sabines is only a nuptial song, where Hymen and War are blended. All that is possible; since it is the property of man to be deceived. *Humanum est errare.* One might be in favour of these discoveries. Though we lose the kings of Rome, no great injury is suffered.

But it is quite otherwise with the subject which occupies us now. If we lose the true Christ, we shall lose all. Now, we lose him, if we lose the purity, the infallibility of the evidence which reveals him to us. Men believe they are attacking only the Bible, but Jesus Christ himself is assailed along with it. If we overthrow a table, all that is upon it falls at the same moment. What? In giving us Christ, would God abandon the revelation of him and of his redemption to the mind of men, fallible and full of prejudices? Would he not impart to them a guidance which would preserve them from error? He would! and for divine things we accordingly have *the testimony of God.* The Scripture itself clearly draws the distinction between the two kinds of evidence. “If we receive the witness of men,” it says, “the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God, which he hath testified of his Son.”†

It is that testimony of God which is now attacked. “The Bible,” men say, “is no longer an authority.”

* See, among others, *L'Histoire Romaine*, par Michelet.

† 1 John v. 9.

We enrol ourselves against that assertion ; but before combatting it, let us state our opinion.

Faith is not produced in an individual, and the church is not created in the world, simply by the agency of the Holy Scriptures—they are produced by the word of God, and by the grace of the Spirit. These two agents have always been intimately allied, and the one has never produced faith without the other. Christ, in passing through the world, left us the *Word*—Christ, in sitting down at the right hand of God in heaven, sent to us the *Spirit*. Wherever these two powers operate, a child of God is found, and the church of God is born.

But, my brethren, it appears that these two agents are destined to see themselves successively denied. The two or three generations which have preceded us, in permitting Scripture, up to a certain point, to exist, have utterly denied the Holy Spirit. When we were taught the Catechism, and even theology, it appeared, according to the system which was expounded to us, that the Holy Spirit existed only for the apostles ; that he finished his work on the day of Pentecost, and that after that he retired to heaven. The revival of the nineteenth century has combated that withering theory. As a work of the Holy Spirit, the revival has yielded glory to Him, and loudly proclaimed, that “ except a man be born of water and of *the Spirit*, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

At present, it is to the other extreme that men have rushed ; they grant the existence of *the Spirit*, but they deny *the Scripture*. Will this pretext prove better founded than the other ? May God forbid. Not merely

must we preserve the Scripture as well as the Spirit, but, moreover, it is the Scripture which is the supreme authority. No doubt, it cannot create faith without the Holy Spirit. But, since the death of the apostles, the Scripture alone, of all that is on the earth, can tell us the true doctrine of the Lord ; it alone can prevent that doctrine from being falsified by the erring men who are charged with teaching it.

When the Son of God was teaching here below, as the grand and only prophet of the people of God, where did he instruct his disciples to seek and to find the lessons of God ? Was it in internal illuminations, independent of Scripture, as the Essenes did ? or in traditions, in a lifeless orthodoxy, and external worship, like the Pharisees ? or in negations, in unbelieving reason, and pretended lights, like the Sadducees ? No, assuredly ; it was elsewhere—it was in the writings of Moses and the Prophets—in the oracles which for so many ages had animated the elite of Israel with faith, and the expectation of Him who was to be the comforter of his people. Christ honoured the Scriptures ; he explained them ; he employed them as the Word of God himself, as the sovereign authority ; and he, moreover, taught his church that she should render the same honour, the same obedience, to the writings of his own disciples—to the books of the New Testament, in which his Spirit was to embody his definitive and everlasting lessons.

Yes, if there be doctors who endeavour to estrange us from the Scriptures, the Doctor, *par excellence*—He “who knew all things,” Jesus Christ—continually guides us back to them. Ask Him who said, “I am the truth”—Him who, amid the angels of heaven, is called the

fai:thful and the *true*—ask Him, What is the rule of our faith and of our life? What is the authority in the church? He will evermore reply, The Scripture, the Scripture.

Thus, confronted with the teaching of the nineteenth century, whose bold assertions originally came from beyond the Rhine, I present to you the teaching of the first century. Which should you believe? Will you believe man rather than Jesus Christ? “I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say.”

Let us approach, then, the school of Jesus Christ, and listen to what he says concerning the Scriptures.

Why does the Lord descend from the heavens and come to earth? “To seek and to save the lost.” But what plan does he adopt to accomplish that? He tells us, “I am come to fulfil the law and the prophets,” that is to say, *the Scriptures.**

Who would not be filled with adoration in beholding the only Son of the Father becoming man, submitting himself with a care which one might call precise, to all the declarations of the Holy Spirit speaking by holy men of God,† and thus furnishing a grand example which should be followed by his disciples, even till the end of time?

As a son holds in his hands his father’s directions for his journey, and never diverges from them, the Son of God is so full of respect for the Scriptures, that not merely the more conspicuous of his actions, but even those which appear of small moment, have always this for their object, to *fulfil* the Scriptures. If Jesus goes to sojourn at Capernaum, it is with the design, says

* Matt. v. 17.

† 2 Pet. i. 21.

Matthew (iv. 14), “That it might be fulfilled *which was spoken by Esaias the prophet.*” If he reads in the synagogue the words of Isaiah, where the prophet speaks of “Him who heals the broken-hearted,” Jesus shuts the book and says, “This day is *this Scripture fulfilled in your ears.*”* If he causes them to take the ass of Bethphage, it is to *fulfil* the Scripture of Zechariah *concerning the King who was full of meekness.*† If he cries “I am athirst,” it is that “*the Scripture might be fulfilled.*”‡ And if a spear is thrust into his side, it is because Zechariah the prophet had seen and announced it in *the Scriptures.*§ One might call the Lord’s life a fulfilment of the Scriptures. He did all that the Scriptures had prescribed. He kept them with care, and his disciples kept them along with him.

But, more than this. It was in the Scriptures that the Lord caused his disciples to read his history. “Then having begun at Moses,” says Luke, “and all the prophets, he expounded unto them *in all the Scriptures* the things concerning himself.”|| He insisted that *to believe the Scriptures* was enough for comprehending all that related to him. “O fools,” said he, “and slow of heart to believe all the things which the *prophets* have spoken.”¶ And if by his Spirit he opened the understanding of his disciples, it was that “they might understand the *Scriptures.*”** If the Scriptures were at first his *Itinerary*, they are now his *Manual.* It is from that written testimony that He who is Eternal Wisdom derives his own lessons.

* Luke iv. 21.

† Matt. xxi. 4.

‡ John xix. 28.

§ John xix. 34.

|| Luke xxiv. 27.

¶ Luke xxiv. 25.

** Luke xxiv. 45.

But, more still. The Lord establishes the perfect sufficiency of the testimony of the Scriptures to confer eternal life. He wishes us to believe upon their authority—“Search *the Scriptures*,” said he, “for *in them* ye think ye have eternal life: and they are *they* which testify of me.”* And when, in his sublime teachings, he transports us into the invisible world, wishing to impart to men a striking lesson, he informs us, through that father Abraham into whose bosom the angels carry poor Lazarus—“*They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.* If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.”†

But, more still. The Lord proves that absolute and eternal truth is found in the Scriptures, and that *it will never be contradicted*—“*The Scriptures cannot be broken.*”‡ He insists upon it, that “not a single jot, not a single tittle of *that Scripture* shall ever pass away.” Returning to the charge, he exclaims—“It is more easy for heaven and earth to pass, than *for one tittle of the law to fail.*”§ And he does not assert that merely of the words of the Old Testament, but moreover of those of the New—“Heaven and earth shall pass away, but *my words* shall not pass away.”||

But, more still. The Lord has recourse to the Scriptures to prove the doctrine which he teaches. If he is employed in establishing the fact that, though rejected, he is still the Foundation-stone of salvation, and the Head of the Church, he says—“Have ye not *read in the Scriptures*, The stone which the builders rejected, the

* John v. 39. † Luke xvi. 29-31. ‡ John x. 35.

§ Luke xvi. 17; Matt. v. 18. || Matt. xxiv. 35.

same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?"*

And when the Lord would convince heretics, when he would demonstrate the resurrection against the unbelieving Sadducees, to what authority does he appeal? To the Scriptures—"Have you not *read* that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living."†

Yes, this rule of Scripture held so high an authority in the eyes of Jesus, that he who was the *Truth*, who was *God* himself, was not ashamed to prove his own doctrine by *Scripture*.

But, more still. The Lord declares that the fountain of error is neglect of the Scriptures. As the steps of man become bewildered by the darkness when the sun disappears, his soul is bewildered when Scripture no longer enlightens it. "You err," said he to the Sadducees, "not knowing the *Scriptures*."‡ And when he wishes to justify the hosannas of the children, it is still to Scripture that he appeals—"Have you never *read*, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?"§

Finally; the Lord declares why he appeals without ceasing to the Scriptures; it is because God, the Holy Spirit, himself has spoken by their authors. "How then does David in the Spirit (in the *Spirit!*) call Christ his Lord?" says Jesus in Matt. xxii. 43; and he repeats it in Mark—"David himself has said, *by the Holy Spirit*, Sit thou at my right hand."

* Matt. xxi. 42.

+ Matt. xxii. 31, 32.

‡ Matt. xxii. 29.

§ Matt. xxi. 16.

Thus, if Jesus establishes the truth, it is by appealing to the testimony of God in Scripture. Behold the rule of the Christian brotherhood ; for, if any one should have known its nature, it was surely Jesus Christ himself. Can any one admit, after hearing this, that the authority of Scripture was invented by Catholics in later ages ; or, "that biblicism is the scourge of the church ?" Jesus Christ, who unceasingly appeals to the Bible, must, in that case, have been "the scourge of the church," or, at least, has introduced into the church what must become its scourge ! Besides, we must remember, that this assertion regarding biblicism is not new. The popes for fifty years have scarcely published a single bull, or an encyclical letter, of which these words, "biblicism is the scourge of the church" do not form the substance. Pius IX., two or three months ago, while he was sending forth another letter from Geneva, wrote from Portici to all the Italian Bishops an encyclical letter, of which this is the summary—"Biblicism is the scourge of the church." Yes, of the church of the Pope ! That, at least, is true !

It might suffice, my brethren, to have shown the testimony which the Son has given to the Bible and its authority. Some have said that the authority of Scripture was an invention of Catholicism. Now, the Gnostics, on whose account they would have it invented, lived between the year 130 and the year 140, and the Lord teaches the divine authority of the Scriptures from the year 30 to the year 33. But, he is not alone. Whilst the writers who refute the Gnostics wrote, for the most part, about the year 180, the apostles teach this divine authority of the Scriptures from the year 40 to the year

60. In the two cases there is the trifling error of a century—that is worth being observed.

In fact, the testimony of the Son is completed by that of the apostles. The evidence of the disciples has even a peculiar importance. A certain doctor, whose name I have forgotten, wished to weaken the testimony of Jesus Christ, by saying that the words uttered by the Lord still belonged to the old economy, and could decide nothing as to the essence of the new. What! Did Christ, the head of the new economy—did Christ, who began his ministry by “preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God,” and saying, “the time is at hand”—still employ the forms of the old? He not an authority for the new! Christ not a Christian! That were, doubtless, a strange discovery. But, suppose it possible that Jesus Christ did not, in fact, speak in the spirit of the new economy, the apostles, at least, must have done so. After the day of Pentecost the church was definitively inaugurated—we possess a perfect Christianity. Now, the testimonies in favour of the authority of the Scriptures are still more numerous after Pentecost than before.

What did the apostle Peter, who, when he found himself among the disciples in the upper chamber, had said, “*This Scripture* must needs have been fulfilled, which *the Holy Ghost*, by the *mouth* of David, spake before concerning Judas,”* say, when he stood in Solomon’s porch, before all the astonished people? “Those things which God before *had showed* by the *mouth of all his prophets*, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.”† At a subsequent time, what is the

* Acts i. 16.

† Acts iii. 18.

injunction of the same apostle, when, in his first epistle, he gives directions regarding the manner of acting in the church as stewards of the grace of God? "If any man speak," says he, "let him speak *as the oracles of God.*"* This is thorough biblicism!

And Paul of Tarsus; how does he act? When he was at Rome, did he speak against biblicism, like Pius VII., Gregory XVI., Pius IX., and others? Oh, no! He appeals to *the Bible*. Amid the Israelites assembled in his house, he teaches them the things which refer to Jesus, according to "the law of Moses and the prophets."† This is biblicism! When he writes to Corinth, how does he express himself? "I delivered unto you, first of all, that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins *according to the Scriptures.*"‡ This is biblicism!

But, it is chiefly in teaching Christian doctrines, it is when they labour to prove that Jesus is the Christ, that the apostles recur to the Scriptures. Paul is at Thessalonica! How does he act there? "Paul, according to his custom," says Luke, his companion, "went in unto them, and three Sabbath days reasoned with them out of *the Scriptures*; opening and alleging that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ."§ This is biblicism!

But this is not the only case. Let us proceed to Corinth, and behold a man of great eloquence, who speaks in the assemblies. He is called Apollos. How does he act? "He mightily convinced the Jews, and

* 1 Pet. iv. 11.

† Acts xxviii. 23.

‡ 1 Cor. xv. 3.

§ Acts xvii. 2, 3.

that publicly," says Luke, "showing by *the Scriptures* that Jesus was Christ."* This is biblicism!

But, with the *example* of biblicism, the apostles give precepts concerning it. Yes, my brethren, Paul declares, in his Epistle to the Romans, what is the use of the Scriptures. That use is—"To make wise unto salvation." "For whatsoever things *were written aforetime, were written for our learning*; that we, through patience and comfort of *the Scriptures*, might have hope."† And, when he teaches a doctor, Timothy, what does he say? "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned, and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known *the Holy Scriptures*, which are *able to make thee wise unto salvation* through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for *doctrine*, for *reproof*, for *correction*, for *instruction* in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, *throughly furnished* unto all good works."‡ And, why should the Scriptures be thus employed in the church? Paul does not fail to announce that to Timothy, and to us—"All Scripture," he says, "is given by inspiration."

All very true, some one will say, as to Peter and Paul, but the other disciples—James for example? James appeals in the same way to the authority of the Scriptures, saying, "Think you that *the Scripture speaks in vain?*"§ But John? John declares to us that the disciples had faith "in *the Scriptures*, and in the words" which their Master had spoken.|| And it is "by the

* Acts xviii. 28. † Rom. xv. 4. ‡ 2 Tim. iii. 14-17.

§ James iv. 5.

|| John ii. 22.

Scriptures," according to him, that the disciples recognised Jesus as the Messiah. But Philip ? Philip found Nathaniel, and said to him, " We have found Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph, him of whom Moses has written in the law, and of whom also the prophets *have written.*" The authority of the Scriptures is so completely the great fact recognised and proclaimed from the commencement of Christianity, that if any disciples wished to subject oral teaching to the authority of the Scriptures, they are specially commended : " These (Bereans) were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so." *

And if such be the authority of the ancient Scriptures for Peter, Paul, John, and, above all, for Jesus Christ himself, how great is the authority which we should attach to the new Scriptures which come from the apostles of the Lord ? Can it be necessary to obtain a third Testament to give evidence to the second, as we have a second to bear evidence to the first ? Could the writings of Moses, of David, of Solomon, of Isaiah, of Amos, have greater authority for the founders of the kingdom of God, than the writings of these founders themselves should have for us who are members of that kingdom ? If our father has recognised the authority of his father, we recognise it also ; but we recognise, above all, the authority of our own parent. Can it be true that the authority of the holy books of the Jews must be fully acknowledged by us, since it was so by Jesus Christ and by his apostles, but that the authority

* Acts xvii. 11.

of the holy books of the Christians may be contested ? In my view, this pretence would just reduce the Christians to the level of the Jews. If any one wishes to become a Jew, let him ; but we should be sorry for it. The opinion of those who recognise authority neither in the Old Testament nor the New is, without doubt, most dangerous ; but the opinion of those who (like some young Christians with whom we have conversed) candidly acknowledge the authority of the Old Testament as established in the New, yet reject that of the New itself, is certainly most strange, and most illogical.

The appeals to the writings of the Old Testament ought naturally to be more numerous in the New, than the appeals to the writings of the New itself. A jurisconsult called to give an opinion upon a question of law, cites the views of the Roman and other lawyers, and does not quote himself at all. As the New Testament did not exist in the days of Jesus, it is clear that he does not quote it—these are common truths which one is afraid to announce. But it was not altogether the same, even in the time of the apostles. As the New Testament began to appear, we find, in the apostolic writings, appeals to the books of the New Testament itself. Thus the apostle Peter refers to that which his “ well-beloved brother, Paul, had written in his epistles ;” epistles which he puts in the same rank as “ the Scriptures,” saying, “ as also the other *Scriptures*.” An attentive study of the New Testament enables us to discover there many quotations from the New Testament itself. I will quote to you only a single example. We read in the epistle of Jude, “ But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the

apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ ; how that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts.”* Now the word rendered “ mocker,” ἐμπαικτης, is found only twice in the New Testament—here in Jude, and again in an epistle from an apostle of our Lord Jesus Christ. And who is that apostle ? Is it Paul, John, James ? No. Is it Peter ? Yes. And to which of the two epistles of Peter does it relate ? To that admirable second epistle of Peter, which supplies so beautiful a testimony to the inspiration of the Bible, and which some now audaciously reject from the sacred collection. “ Know that in the last days,” it is there said, “ there shall come scoffers, walking after their own lusts.”† There is more still ; the authors of the New Testament themselves declare that the design of their writings is to serve as a foundation for the faith of Christians. Thus John says,‡ “ These things are *written*, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God ; and that believing ye might have life through his name.” And Luke *writes*,§ “ That ye may know the certainty (the firmness, the proper infallibility) || of the things wherein thou hast been instructed.”

Ah ! if we acknowledge the authority of the Word of the Old Testament, with greater reason should we recognise the authority of the Word of the New. Is not the Old Testament presented to us as a pedagogy, a preparatory school ?¶ Are we not told that the old cove-

* Jude 17, 18. † 2 Pet. iii. 3. ‡ John xx. 31. § Luke i. 4.

|| Ἀσφαλεια, ex α priv. et σφαλλομαι labefactor; proprie, conditio ejus qui tutus est a lapsu.

¶ Gal. iii. 24.

nant “waxed old, and was ready to vanish away?”* And should not the writings of the *definitive* Testament possess an authority as great, at least, as those of the *preparatory* Testament? Should that which vanishes away possess more force than that which shall not vanish for ever?

It is Christ that has ransomed us from ignorance, and delivered us from error—those sad companions of sin! And now, when we desire to arrive at the certain and infallible knowledge of truth, should we not address ourselves, above all, to *Christ*, and to those who have explained and continued his work, and whose writings form the New Testament?

The counsel of God to redeem man began immediately after the fall. But for reasons known to God alone, perhaps because the world is subject to a law of progression which God did not wish to suspend, there were successive degrees in the revelation of God. “It was like the shining light which shineth more and more unto the perfect day;” that is to say, up to the moment when He appeared, “in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”† The testimony of God, as ages rolled on, became, not more inspired, but more clear and perfect. Do we not know, even in human things, that a book of mathematics, or philosophy, or physics, gives the definite results of the science only at the conclusion—results, however, which we cannot well understand, except in so far as we have seized upon the elementary principles. And should these results, which terminate the matter so that there is

* Heb. viii. 13.

† Col. ii. 3.

no occasion to return to it, possess less authority for us than the first and imperfect elements ?

The Old Testament contains nothing but truth, nothing but good ; but that truth and that good are adapted to an inferior religious culture, and are designed to guide man to a higher degree. There are things in the Old Testament which are explained in the New—there are some which are completed—there are some which are modified—there are some which are abolished. The Old Testament contains the essential outlines of redemption ; but the completion of that which it prefigures is found only in the New. The one is a sketch ; the other is the finished painting. The New Testament is the key of the Old. But shall the key be less adapted to introduce us to the full knowledge of the things of God than the lock was ? Did the book which is *explanatory*, come less directly from God than the book to be *explained* ?

The New Testament, which announces to us essentially not the law, but the gospel, and which announces it not by images and prophecies more or less obscure, but with great fulness of light and brightness—the New Testament, which makes us acquainted with Him who is above all the prophets, the priests, and the kings of the old economy, HIm “out of whose fulness we receive grace and truth”—the New Testament, which not only lifts the veil which prevented the prophets from arriving at a clear view of the things which they announced, but moreover, explains some mysteries upon which silence had been kept from eternity *—the New Testament should obviously be the foundation, the rule, the testimony, the divine authority upon which Christian

* Rom. xvi. 25.

knowledge reposes. It is the primary and essential source of evangelical truth; and if God himself be the rock whence the less transparent waters of the old economy gush, it would be illogical and anti-Christian to assign another origin to the pure and vivifying stream of the new revelation. The Old Testament resembles the first elevations of our Alps, where the soil is already firm, and the view extensive, but which are only like the round of a ladder to enable us to arrive at the lofty heights, entirely formed of living rock, and from which one embraces the immensity of the Creator's works. In passing from the one to the other, you do not descend—you mount; you do not stand upon more uncertain footing, but on a more solid resting-place. We have in the revelation of the New Testament Scriptures a more complete, more clear, more constraining message. Christ "was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house."* That is true of the writings of the two economies, as it is true of their Mediators. It is what the Lord himself would say when he pronounces this remarkable sentence—"Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist; but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he."† Whether the words "the least" refer to the prophets, or to ordinary believers, this passage establishes the grand superiority of the revelation of Jesus Christ.

This superiority is now manifest; and if there be any who demand a third testament to give evidence to the second, as there is a second to give evidence to the first,

* Heb. iii. 3.

† Luke vii. 28.

we will present it to them. The signs, the wonders wrought by the authors of the New Testament, the prophecies which they uttered, and which are accomplished, the formation of the church, the establishment of Christianity in the world—you who believe!—behold, if you desire it, a third Testament which vouches for the second! As to the signs of my apostleship, said Paul, “Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds.”* All show us that the Scriptures were given to man, during a creative period, when God immediately interposed by his sovereign power. The Spirit who, to give evidence to certain Jews, resuscitated Lazarus, did not stand afar off when it was needful to give testimony to all ages and all people. The same Spirit who brought the brother of Martha and Mary alive from the tomb, is also the Spirit who evoked from the limited understanding of fishermen and tax-gatherers of Judea, the eternal truths, unknown to Aristotle and Plato, which have been, which are, and which must for ever be, the sole luminary of mankind. The Scriptures are the permanent miracle, the only one which can be necessary for us. The others have passed away—this remains. We may try to explain it away, as some have wished to explain away the other miracles of Jesus; but “blessed are they who believe!” One cannot even believe truly in Christ without believing the inspired Scriptures of God. “Faith in Christ,” says Tholuck, “includes confidence in the apostles. Christ,” he adds, “would not be what he is, had he confided the germ of his heart, still so delicate, to hands which would have marred rather than developed it.”†

"But the New Testament," some say, "does not profess in any part to be inspired. There is not one of the authors of that collection who expresses the least pretension of that kind." Strange sentiment! Ah, my brethren, we do not ask you to have any other opinion concerning the Scriptures of the New Testament than they who wrote them held. Only listen to them. If they preach the good news, it is, they say, "with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven,"* "by the revelation of Jesus Christ."† If they give a commandment, it is in the name of the Holy Spirit—"It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us."‡ If they address a counsel, it is "by the Spirit of God."§ If they know the mystery of Christ, it is because "it has been revealed unto them by the Spirit."|| If they speak of things which are not shown to the heart of man, it is because the Spirit who searches the deep things of God has revealed them to them.¶ If they speak, in particular, of the resurrection, it is "by the word of the Lord."** If they are roused against those who reject their instructions, it is because in doing that, they do not reject man alone, "but God who has given them the Holy Spirit."††

And let us not forget, that when Paul said that "all Scripture is inspired by God," it was in the last of his epistles that he did it, at a time when his other writings, and those of many of his companions in labour, were already added to the number of the "Scriptures."†† More-over, according to some learned doctors, that passage applies to the New Testament as well as to the Old.

I repeat it—Let us hold no opinion regarding the

* 1 Pet. i. 12.

† Gal. i. 12.

‡ Acts xv. 28.

§ 1 Cor. vii. 40.

|| Eph. iii. 5.

¶ 1 Cor. ii. 10.

** 1 Thess. iv. 15.

†† 1 Thess. iv. 16.

‡‡ 2 Pet. iii. 8.

Scriptures of the New Testament other than that of the apostles themselves.

“The only means of clearly understanding the Scriptures,” said the learned Olshausen, “is to study the manner in which inspired men themselves understood them. To despise that key, is to withdraw men from the living fountain of salvation.”*

It is the Holy Spirit who decides the mission of the apostle Paul ; it is the Holy Spirit who withholds him from places where he must not preach the gospel—from Mysia and Bithynia ;† it is that Spirit who leads him to the place where he ought to preach.‡ And will that Spirit, who directs the least of his steps—who makes him take the path to the right rather than that to the left—abandon him to himself when it is necessary to guard him against error, and lead him in the truth—when his duty is to write the holy letters which must, even to the end of time, “make men wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Jesus Christ ?”

The disciples, the propagators of the new economy, are not merely apostles, they are often declared to be apostles and *prophets*. If they were prophets, then they were inspired men ; and that means, that those men spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

The promise and the word of the Master, could never prove to be vain. The Lord, in many a repetition, had promised the *Holy Spirit* to the apostles, not merely as to ordinary disciples, but in the prospect of *their commission*, and as his *ambassadors*. An intimate connection exists between the *commission* of the apostles and the

* *Du sens profond des Ecritures.*

† *Acts xvi.*

‡ *Acts xvi. 8.*

possession of the *Spirit*—all the occasions on which that Spirit is promised make that manifest.

The Lord, for the first time, is going to send out the *twelve*, and invest them with authority. What does he say at that juncture? That “it is not they who speak, but the *Spirit of their Father* who shall speak in them.”*

The Lord, before his death, assembles his witnesses, to whom alone he then speaks, and in view of the charge which he gives them, he promises them another *Help* and *Defender*, “the Holy Spirit, who shall be in them.”† The Holy Spirit is not only to recall to the messengers the instructions of the Master (which the Holy Spirit could do in ordinary ways), but he is moreover to *complete* these lessons, which indicates a special intervention. He will guide the apostles “into all truth,” even into the truths which they could not “bear,” or comprehend at that time.‡ This manifestation of *new* truths by the Holy Spirit, evidently forms no part of the ordinary work which that Spirit accomplishes in the faithful. If the Lord were pleased to reveal *new* truths in our day, the interposition by which he accomplished that would be regarded as miraculous. Jesus adds, that this Spirit shall not speak “of himself,” and much less would he speak from the resources peculiar to man. No, “he will take of that which is Christ’s,” or, which is the same thing, of the fulness of the Father; for “all that the Father hath are mine.”§ Behold how the Lord speaks to his apostles, when he prepares them for the charge which he gave them to perpetuate his work upon the earth!

* Matt. x. 20. † John xiv. 16, 17. ‡ John xvi. 12, 13.

§ John xvi. 14, 15.

And when, after his resurrection, the Lord says to his messengers, “ As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you”—when he adds, “ Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them”—what does he do, in conferring upon them that mission, and these extraordinary powers? He breathes upon them, as the symbol of the Spirit which they should receive, and says to them, “ Receive the Holy Ghost.” *

Finally, when Jesus gives a commission to his apostles to be his witnesses among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem, he commands them to wait till they should “ be endued with power from on high.” † And elsewhere, ‡ we find the same charge united with the same promise.

Thus the *charge* of the apostles, and the *gift* of the Spirit bestowed upon them, are every where found in the most intimate relation.

What! shall that Spirit, promised by the Master, in truth inspire the apostles when they speak to some Jews of Lystra, of Iconium, or some other village of Asia or of Greece—and shall he cease to inspire them when they compose their writings, which were to constitute the instruction of all ages? What the apostles said must have been the voice of God to their hearers, and shall what they wrote not be the voice of God to us?

Thus, my brethren, you see that if there be one principle in the world, which has been professed without interruption, and under many forms, first by Jesus Christ, and then by his apostles, it is that which has become the basis of the renovated church, and which Luther and all the Protestants proclaimed at Smalcalde.

* John xx. 21-23. † Luke xxiv. 46-49. ‡ Acts i. 4, 8.

“ *Verbum Dei condit articulos Fidei, et præterea nemo, ne Angelus quidem.*” * “ The Word of God is the foundation of the articles of faith ; *besides it no man, not even an angel.*” The subjective principle of the authority of the individual Christian, now put forward, under the name of the Holy Spirit, is the principle of licentiousness. The Romish principle of the authority of the church is that of despotism ; but the principle of the authority of the Scripture of God, established by Jesus Christ and by the apostles, is equally opposed to the licentious and the arbitrary, and should make order and liberty reign in the church. This principle will not occasion our fall into licentiousness like the first, for it establishes in the church a rule which is inflexible and immovable. It will not subject us to the blows of despotism, like the second ; for the rule which it prescribes we must necessarily receive into our hearts by free convictions. There are two terms which are diversely combined in the question which engages us at present. These terms are *authority* and *liberty*. The system which we now combat wishes liberty without authority—the Romish system wishes authority without liberty ; the system of Jesus Christ admirably combines the two. It represses despotism on the one hand, and confusion on the other. Before its sovereign power the gates of hell are closed.

This, doubtless, is not saying that the scriptural authority established by the Lord must banish every dispute. There will always be contests, as there will always be sects ; the church must have freedom, for it must have life ; but this principle gives the church the means of closing with her adversaries. Were we to

* Art. Smalcalde. II. pars.

establish the reign of pontifical despotism, would the church be at peace for that, as the Papists pretend ? No ; for she would have to contend against freedom. Were we to admit the reign of personal authority, would the church be free for that, as the Rationalists pretend ? No ; for she would become the servant of some strong individuality, and, in every case, the slave of our degraded self. Liberty and order are never found united, except in the system of Jesus Christ. It is for that reason that it is destined for the healing of the nations.

“If you wish to move through life without danger to your conscience,” said Luther, “abstain from speculating and prying into every question with your reason. Apart from his Word and his Son, no man finds God. You should learn to know God as the Holy Scriptures depict him.”

II. We turned at the outset towards the Son, and have heard the testimony which he bears to the Scriptures. But, let us now turn towards the Holy Spirit, and ask what testimony He who is God with the Father and the Son, has rendered to that Word, which is preserved for us in the oracles of God. I know, my brethren, that this subject is difficult. I also know that some Protestants do not like to hear us speak of it ; but, I do not hesitate to say, that, in my view, it possesses great importance in the evangelical church, especially for the faith of the young. Besides, if it be necessary to maintain the rights of *Scripture*, it is necessary, also, to uphold the rights of the *Spirit*. We must not sacrifice either the one or the other. Those who

attack the reign of the Scriptures, overthrow, by the same effort, the reign of the Spirit. We wish men to desire, and, above all, to possess, the Comforter, who formed the powerful principle of the apostolic brotherhood. We desire that, at this very hour, the Holy Spirit would grant us light, faith, prayerfulness, and life. If, on the one hand, we repel the audacious attempt of those who reject the authority of the Scriptures of God, —exclaiming, *The Spirit! The Spirit!* we oppose, on the other, the withering doctrine of those who, while they respect the inspiration of the apostles, do not know that “no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.”*

To discover the testimony which was rendered to the Word of God by the Holy Spirit, in the early ages of Christianity, I will ask you to accompany me into some towns of the East.

Come, then, enter with me into this town of Philippi, in Macedonia, near which the battle took place which left the republican party in Rome without a defender. A Christian man, Paul of Tarsus, near a river there, orally addresses to some women assembled those divine lessons which we now possess in his writings. How does the Holy Spirit, who is also there, proceed? The Holy Spirit bears witness, in the soul of a seller of purple, to “the words which were spoken by Paul.” He opens her heart; and then this woman believes that the word is the Word of God, and is saved.

Let us proceed further, and enter into this town of Thessalonica, in Mygdonia, to which the sister of Alexander gave her name. It is the same Paul who speaks;

* 1 Cor. xii. 3.

and how does the Holy Spirit work in those who hear him? The Holy Spirit bears witness to them that “the word which they hear is not the word of man, but, in truth, the word of God.”* He makes it “work in them effectually;” and these men, believing that when Paul speaks God speaks, are saved.

Let us pursue our course in the Levant, and proceed as far as the city of Corinth, celebrated for its commerce, its riches, its luxury, and its prytanes.† It is still the same Paul who preaches; and how does the Holy Spirit act, who is also there? The Holy Spirit so works that Paul’s preaching does not consist in the persuasive words of human wisdom, but “in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power; in so much that their faith did not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.”‡

O you, who have “been begotten by the word of truth,”§ it is easy for you to comprehend the testimony which the Holy Spirit gave at the beginning, to that Word which the Scripture has preserved for us, for that same Spirit (if you believe) still gives the same testimony in your hearts.

Yes, my brethren, in the same manner as the gift of the Holy Scripture is a gift from that grace of God which has “the saving of our souls” for its object, faith in the Holy Scripture is a part of that faith which saves us. It is not arguments that can deliver us from that condition of spiritual insensibility in which the natural man is found. It is necessary that God give us a *new* heart, a *new* spirit. That same Word which said for the

* 1 Thess. ii. 13.

† Magistrates appointed in certain of the towns of Greece, chiefly regarding criminal matters.—T.R.

‡ 1 Cor. ii. 4, 5.

§ James i. 18.

universe, in the beginning, "Let light be, and light was," makes itself heard in our soul ; it creates in us a new light, and we are constrained to recognise the divinity, the authority, of that creative word. In as far as we have not received that new Spirit, the gospel, which is to the believer the wisdom of God, is foolishness to us. Conversion is the grand proof of the divine authority of the Scriptures. No one can recognise the Spirit of God in the Scriptures, except the man whose mind God "opens" for that end. Whenever we attempt to discern an object, we need an eye to see it. Now, it is God who gives that eye ; and he gives it by means of the *Scripture* itself. It is the Scripture which works the miracle of regeneration. The Holy Spirit—understand it well, my dear hearers—is not communicated to you without a medium ; that is the opinion of the mystics and the illuminated, but it is not the mind of the Lord. That Spirit does not communicate himself to the heart of man otherwise than with and by the Word of God, because in that Word—in that Scripture, "there is found," as Peter says, "an incorruptible seed which lives and abides for ever."*

What ! my brethren, do I recognise God in the word which created the universe—what say I ? in the word which created a blade of grass ? I know that no word of man could make it ; and shall I not recognise God in that word which has *created me anew*, which has given *peace to my soul*? "As the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater ; so shall *my word* be that goeth forth

* 1 Pet. i. 23.

out of *my mouth*: it shall not return unto me void; but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace."* Thus, as the productions of the earth are a proof that the rain comes from heaven, the peace and the joy of the Christian are a proof rendered to the Word which comes from God. Nay more, "The seed," says the Lord, "is the word of God."† The seed and the Word have equally in them a certain power, which is manifested, in the fields or in men's hearts, by the fruit which it produces, and these fruits are such that we must recognise in them the work of God himself.

O unconverted men! Do you wish to possess true faith? Come to the school of the Holy Spirit; in your closet, open the Scriptures before you—without believing as yet, if you please, that they are the Word of God. Read, search, fathom, weigh attentively in your heart the words which are found there, line after line, word after word. Listen! While you read, the Holy Spirit, who prompted the holy men of God, will suddenly "cause his light to shine into your heart,"‡ as Paul has said, when that Holy Spirit will testify within you that "Jesus is the Son of God, the Saviour"—when that Holy Spirit will convince you that "God has given you eternal life, and that that life is in his Son." Oh! then, my brother, there will be produced in *you* a faith quite different, and far more elevated than that which human proofs impart—a divine faith which will render you perfectly certain that the Scripture, which tells you of Christ, is *from God*.

* Isa. iv. 10-12.

† Luke viii. 11.

‡ 2 Cor. iv. 6.

The faith which shall bring us salvation, will comprehend also faith in that Scripture in which salvation is presented to us. You will believe in the grace of Christ, but you will also believe in his Word; you will believe in his mercy, but you will also believe in his truth. “Thy word is perfectly pure; I am satisfied therewith.”

O wonderful mystery! The divine Word enters into us—yes, into our poor heart; and it manifests itself to us as the sun proves his existence, when he gleams brightly in the skies. There is not in this case a mere degree of probability, as inattentive Christians might be disposed to think; there is the demonstration of the Spirit and of power. When you experience in yourselves the vivifying power of the word of the prophets and apostles, you feel yourselves urged towards Jesus Christ, whom you do not yet know—drawn towards him by a close affinity. The Holy Spirit makes you feel that the life which begins to awake within you, but which has still so much need to increase, and the life which abounds, in such wonderful perfection, in the Scriptures, are *both* of the same nature, and both proceed from a special and marvellous operation of God. There is between these two lives (the life eternal of Scripture and the new life of your heart) an identity which surprises you. If you have indeed received the life of God, you must needs comprehend me.

The principle of eternal life which was lodged in you when you were converted, and which is, alas! still so imperfect, is assuredly not of human origin; it is God—yes, God himself—who is its author.

To confess that it was *God* and not *man* who con-

verted you, you will be ready to lay down your life. Is that not true, Children of God? How, then, can these Scriptures, where we find a divine life much more pure, much more perfect, much more original and primitive, than that which is in our poor heart, be of human origin? How could any but God be its author? . . . Ah! if I recognise the hand of God and the Spirit of God in a little hill, with much more reason do I recognise them in the white and gigantic masses of the Alps. If I recognise the hand of God and the Spirit of God in the humming bee, with much more reason do I recognise them in the majestic face of man. If I recognise the hand and the Spirit of God in the new light which appears in my heart, with much greater reason do I recognise them in the creative light which shines in the Holy Scriptures, and which makes “every man see.”

A child, nursed by his mother, knows the bosom of his mother; he knows that that bosom gives him milk, as the Christian knows that the Scripture gives him the Spirit. That child, moreover, seeks the bosom of his mother as the source of his life; to take her away is to take away his milk. O Holy Scriptures! O sacred breasts which have fed me with milk, I search you; I wish never to be separated from you, for, to take you from me were to take my life! I recognise in you the life of God, and I adore Him who has placed that life in you!

Thus, then, my brethren, that Holy Spirit, whom some wish to exalt by denying the authority of the Scripture, himself attests, in opposition to them, the divine authority of the oracles of God.

It has been recently said, that in ceasing to recognise

the Bible as an authority, we shall be led to seek more ardently for the Holy Spirit—that Scripture and the Spirit exclude each the other—that where the Scripture is, the Spirit disappears. These words are strange, my brethren; they would be prodigies of danger, if they were not prodigies of error. The Holy Spirit is communicated to man, but it is through the channel of the Scriptures. The Word declares to us that the Holy Scriptures save by faith in Jesus Christ; that faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. Behold the teaching of God! These words, “The Spirit and the Scripture are reciprocally exclusive,” amount to the following propositions:—A field of corn, and the bread which nourishes man, are exclusive the one of the other—a fountain, and the water which quenches man’s thirst, are reciprocally exclusive—the sun, and the light which enlightens man, are reciprocally exclusive—the bosom of a mother, and the milk which gives life to a child, are reciprocally exclusive.

No; it is not true that where the Scripture is, there the Spirit disappears. On the contrary, nothing is so intimately united as the Spirit and Scripture. Scripture enables us to find the Holy Spirit—the Holy Spirit gives faith in Scripture. It is not the authority of the church which gives us faith in Scripture, as the Popes pretend; it is not certain principles of reason, as some Protestant theologians pretend; it is *God himself* who creates that faith *in us* by his Word and by his Holy Spirit. We have an immediate demonstration of the divinity of Scripture, derived from the life which has been manifested, and which is the light of men. Our faith in the Word of God is not simply an *historical*

faith, as some imagine, nor simply a *philosophical* faith, as others think ; no, it is a *divine* faith, a faith which thus possesses a *certainty*, an *inherent firmness*, exalted and invincible, like God who is its author.

This doctrine, my brethren (for it is a doctrine), has often been opposed ; first, by Roman Catholics, but also by the Arminians, the Socinians, the Rationalists, vulgar and uncommon, who, when employed in opposing the Word of God, make common cause with the Papists. And why has this doctrine been thus assailed ? Because men have made religion too much an affair of knowledge—a dead intellectualism. To many (perhaps to many of those who are here), the testimony of the Spirit has been nothing but a kind of probability which flows from a certain vague but beneficent influence which Christianity exerts upon our heart. Men have, in consequence, regarded that testimony as insufficient, and have made faith in the divinity of the Scriptures to depend upon proofs addressed to the understanding.

But, my brethren, do we not see philosophy herself, the best, the most exalted, that of Kant, if you please, acknowledging that religious conviction cannot be demonstrated by *arguments*? Does not philosophy teach us now, that that conviction is the fruit of a new life, that it must be given through faith, and have not men thus restored to its place of honour the ancient maxim—*Per fidem ad intellectum*?

Will you object that there are some souls who are regarded as converted who, notwithstanding, do not admit the divine authority of the Scriptures ? I will answer, that that case is, at the least, very exceptional.

A cloud, it is true, may pass over the spirit of a child of God, without his having fallen from grace on that account; but if that cloud do not pass away—if the night deepen, instead of being dispelled, that is a proof that that conversion was not genuine. We shall see that soul sinking again, by little and little, into the darkness from which it appeared to have emerged.

Will you say, moreover, that words pronounced by men have, even by themselves, converted? I will not stop at a remark which has been made, namely, that a conversion produced by Scripture alone, has generally greater truth and depth than when some human intervention is found between the soul and the Bible. But I will ask, Whence has that Word, spoken or written by man, been taken? Of what is it a repetition? Of the Word of God in Scripture. If a sentiment be not derived from that, it never will convert. The water which you drink comes, no doubt, from the cisterns or the reservoirs which you possess in your homes: these reservoirs may even have imparted to it a taste which is not natural; but if it quench your thirst, if it preserve your life, is it to these reservoirs of stone, or earth, or wood, that you would ascribe it? Does not that virtue flow from the fountain whence the water originally gushes? Though it have remained some time in your vases, and have there lost a portion of its original purity, it does not, on that account, flow less pure from the mountains of God, and it proclaims its Creator.

Will you still propose another objection? Will you say that this demonstration of the Holy Spirit is not

necessary ; that there are arguments by which theology proves revelation and inspiration, and that we are not permitted to weaken them ? I answer that in two ways ; the first is, that these arguments are not useless ; the second is, that they are not sufficient.

They are not *useless* ; they serve to guide us to Scripture, and render us attentive to the *seal* of divinity which God has attached to it.

But they are not *sufficient*. A conviction which rests only upon scientific proofs cannot be of a proper kind. That would be only a *human* faith, and a human faith does not save.

Let us clearly understand, my brethren, the relations in which learning stands to faith, at a time when that learning is too much lauded by some, and too much despised by others. Learning cannot produce faith, but it can vindicate it. And if theology, some one will say, does not sufficiently vindicate our faith, what must it be ? What will happen ? It is very easy to tell you that : it would be a proof of the imperfection of theology, but it would not by any means be a proof of the uncertainty of faith. Faith is above the arguments of science ; and as arguments cannot give it, arguments cannot take it away. The attacks of theologians or of unbelievers against theology, are nothing to faith. Christianity is a fact, a truth, a life, an experience. A simple-minded Christian can feel himself happy, and in perfect peace in his Christianity without caring at all for the explanations of theologians. This it is important to observe, in opposition to all antagonists, but, in particular, to Roman Catholics, for their argument against Protestant principles rests essentially on the difficulty

which simple believers feel in being assured of the inspiration and the authority of the Holy Scriptures.* Ah! when I am hungry and have eaten, and having eaten am satisfied and refreshed, I have no need, surely, that some naturalist, or some chemist, should come, and by their learned dissertations, or their skilful analysis, prove to me that what has strengthened me was wholesome and genuine food, created by the hand of God himself. The best demonstration is my experience.

The doctrine which we support is not merely the testimony of Scripture ; it is, moreover, the testimony of the Holy Spirit. If we uphold Scripture against those who desire only the Spirit, we uphold the Spirit against those who desire only Scripture. Perhaps the testimony of the Spirit is usually the first. It is that testimony which opens the heart to faith ; but it cannot continue isolated ; we must hear the testimony of the Son—of Scripture itself—and then nothing will be able to overthrow our faith in the divine authority of the Word of God. Men have sometimes separated the testimony of Scripture too much from that of the Spirit. Before a field can bear fruit, it must first be tilled : it is the Spirit who cultivates the field of our hearts ; but it must afterwards be sown, and it is the Word of Scripture which sows it. No, my dear brethren, God has not left in doubt those of you who are not in a condition to examine learned proofs for the divinity of the Scriptures. He has placed you upon a rock which puny human waves will never overthrow. If “the Spirit of him that

* Lectures on the Principal Doctrines and Practices of the Catholic Church, by Dr Wiseman. Lecture Second.—On the Protestant Rule of Faith.

raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you,"* you say with the apostle, "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me,"† and "I know in whom I have believed." In that case, you no more doubt the authority of the Holy Scriptures—the divinity of Him to whom the Scriptures bear witness—the life which he has put within you—than you doubt concerning the natural life of your bodies. But above all, God has opened your eyes to behold the wonders of his law. He has opened your ears and your hearts to hear and comprehend the testimony which the Scripture gives to its own divinity. You now believe *what God has said* in his Holy Word. You have thus in yourselves, and in the Bible, a two-fold proof, which all the learned could not give you, but at the same time (mark it well!) which all the learned cannot take away.

But if we cannot deprive you of Holy Scripture, can you not deprive yourselves of it? "O Timothy," said Paul, "*keep* that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called."‡ "Who stumble at the Word," says Peter, "being disobedient."§ "Beware then," replies Paul, "lest any man fail of the grace of God, like Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright."||

Beware, then, my brethren; tremble lest you lose that faith in the Holy Scriptures which God has given you. "The Holy Scripture is our mother," said Luther, "it is the bosom—it is the sides in which we have been formed for eternal life." I say, then, to you all, my

* Rom. viii. 11.

† Gal. ii. 20.

‡ 1 Tim. vi. 20.

§ 1 Pet. ii. 8.

|| Heb. xii. 15, 16.

brethren, the Holy Scripture is *thy mother*, for it was it which brought thee forth at that sovereign hour of cries, of pains and anguish, when a new man was born for the eternal world. It is *thy mother*, for it was it which fed thee as an infant newly born, with the pure spiritual milk which made thee grow. It is *thy mother*, for it was it which guided thy first steps, and sustained thy tottering frame. It is *thy mother*, for it was at its feet that thou wast seated, while it related to you those beautiful things which God has done for man. It is *thy mother*, for it is it which has appeased the troubles of thy soul, and wiped away thy tears! And couldst thou doubt thy mother? Wouldst thou wish to take her from thy brethren—wouldst thou pursue her with thy blows? Wretch! wouldst thou kill thy mother?

A pious person having heard or read some words directed against the authority of Scripture, immediately placed both her hands upon the Scriptures which were before her and cried (I have heard), “This is *my* Bible! This is *my* Bible! It was *my* God who gave it to me! No one shall rob me of it!”

Do ye the same, my brethren; keep the Holy Scriptures, and above all, obey the Holy Scriptures. Let your obedience to the Word of God be absolute and lively. It is not in theory alone that men can overthrow the authority of the Word of God; it may be done in practice also; and all of us, alas! so violate it every day. Yes, I accuse myself, and I accuse you as taking some part in that fatal error. Let us make haste, then, to discharge a responsibility so weighty. Let us not rest in vague generalities; let us take the Word in the

letter, and fulfil that letter by the Spirit. Know ye what will vanquish that error which threatens to invade the churches? It will not be the refutations of the doctors, but it will be the faithfulness of the disciples, by the power of God. Let the church renew her strength by obedience to the Word; let each believer do that in his sphere, even in the most humble, with a more conscientious exactness, a more perfect truth; let our ways be more constantly in harmony with that sovereign rule. Behold the appeal which is addressed to the whole church by the critical and novel circumstances in which we are placed—"Be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves."* If we do that, we need fear nothing.

The Word will not be wanting to us if we be not wanting to it. "The heavens and the earth shall pass away, but my Word shall not pass away."

* James i. 22.

DISCOURSE II.

THE TESTIMONY OF MEN.

THERE are two portions of the Holy Scriptures on which we found what we have to-day to advance. Here is the first—"Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock ; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house ; and it fell not : for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not : shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand ; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house ; and it fell : and great was the fall of it."—(Matt. vii. 24-27.)

Here is the second passage—"And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone."—(Eph. ii. 20.)

MY BRETHREN,—We mentioned to you a week ago, that on the subject of the divine authority of the Scriptures, we would lay before you, first, the testimony of God, and, secondly, the testimony of men.

We have, at the outset, presented to you the first ;

we have seen how the Father has been pleased to make these two grand manifestations of Godhead, *the Son and the Spirit*, bear witness to his Scriptures. These testimonies are divine; after having heard and comprehended them, we have nothing to do but to receive them.

We have to present to you to-day the testimony of men. This is not the same as the other. The testimony of God is not merely a proof; it is more than a proof. A child, a peasant, many perhaps of those who are here, have some difficulty in understanding how the sun, which sets in the evening in the west, is found in the morning in the east. They could not tell by what law that is accomplished; they know nothing of diurnal revolutions, of the ecliptic, of heliacal, cosmical, or achronic rising and setting; but they know one thing—that is, that the sun is at present in the skies, and that they see him. All the astronomers, or rather the astrologers, in the world might wish to prove, on the contrary, by their minute researches, that their confidence had no solid foundation,—they would reply, I see him. It is the same with you, my brethren, who have heard within you the testimony of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. In spite of all theological subtleties, you *know* that Scripture is from God.

Even those who circulate deadly errors concerning that Scripture, are not insensible, believe me, to the inner testimony of the Word and the Spirit of the Lord. There are, even in their heart, holy accents which plead for the Word of their God. But there is a dualism in the Christian—I mean two kinds of wisdom; and the evil becomes conspicuous when men cultivate the

wisdom which is from beneath, more than that which is from above. The equilibrium is then destroyed, and the fall is great. But do not think that that heavenly wisdom can be utterly mute within their hearts. I will cordially say to them, with Paul, “O King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest.” May God enable some precious souls which Christ has redeemed, to withdraw from the crowd, to retire into solitude, like the Lord, to pray—there to read the Word with a simple heart; and then we shall hear them cry, like David, “Thy Word hath quickened me; the foundation of thy Word is truth.”

Though such be the power of God’s testimony, it is not the same with the testimony of man; we are not of the number of those who place the sacred writers and the fathers and doctors of the church in the same rank, or nearly so. Still, however, the declarations of Christian doctors have a certain value. Even as one who wishes to know what Mahomet taught, would like to ascertain what Abu-Beker, Ali, Abou-Hanifah thought; or, as one who wishes to know what Schleiermacher taught, would seek it from his disciples in Germany and elsewhere; so as regards the doctrine of Christ, though the first thing be to interrogate the Master, it is still interesting and useful next to question the disciples. I design, then, to-day, to set before you the testimony of the disciples of Christ, at the two grandest epochs of the history of man—that of the commencement of Christianity, and that of the Reformation.

I. It has been said among ourselves, that the authority of Scripture is an invention posterior to primitive Christianity. This assertion is not new. Many doctors

have maintained it at different periods. Allow me to quote two of them, one among the Protestants, and the other among the Catholics. Here is the first.

In the middle of the last century, there lived in Germany a learned Protestant, whose character Madame de Staél thus delineates :—“Original and profound, he employed words the most exact and the most cutting ; in his writings, he was always animated by hostility towards the opinions which he attacked, like a huntsman who ever finds more pleasure in the chase than the capture.” That learned man was called Lessing ; he is regarded by the Rationalists themselves as one of the fathers of Rationalism. How did he become so ? According to Dr Hase, himself a Rationalist, Lessing was the first in Germany to attack the divine authority of Scripture, and to pretend that Christianity is independent of the Bible. At first he wished to preserve Christianity, and to sacrifice only the Bible ; but Christianity soon perished along with the Bible. The vase being broken, the life-giving water was spilt and perished. The Christian doctrines fell one after another. A learned divine has given us a history of the revolution which has been wrought in Germany, since the year 1750, in the department of theology.* By degrees men have arrived at that deplorable condition in which they substitute sermons, in empty churches, upon the culture of potatoes, and other *useful* things, for the preaching of Jesus Christ. To pretend, like Lessing, that we aim only at the authority of the Bible, but respect Christianity, is to resemble the American Indians, who cut

* Tholuck’s Abriss einer Geschichte der Umwoezung, &c., in the Vermischte Schriften.

the palm-tree close to the ground, and exclaim, “See, the fruit remains;” and they eat. But wait a few days; the fruit is dried, the branches are dried, the entire trunk is only dried wood, and that tree which would have yielded a fruit so agreeable to you and to your children, is good for nothing but to be cut up, and cast into the fire.

And what did Lessing do to combat the authority of the Bible? Precisely what is done now among ourselves. He said, “It is an invention of Catholicism;” but he made that invention more recent than the time of the Gnostics—about the era of the Council of Nice, in the year 325.*

If the Protestant Rationalists pretend that the authority of Scripture is an invention of Catholicism, see next how the Roman Catholics pretend that it is an invention of Protestantism.

The second of the doctors whom I wish to quote to you is the Roman Catholic, Staphylus, who, when attacking the Reformation with the zeal of an apostate, puts this among the maxims *invented* by the Reformation, “Major est auctoritas Scripturæ quam Ecclesiæ”—the authority of Scripture is greater than that of the Church.

Thus, while treating of the authority of Scripture, Roman Catholics and Rationalist Protestants toss the ball between them—neither party will retain it. That authority, according to each of the two parties, is an invention of the other. In our day, and among ourselves, the ideas of Lessing and of Staphylus have been renewed regarding the recent invention of the authority of Scripture. Let us try to ascertain the mind of the first

* Saemmtliche Schriften, vi. 47, 51.

ages; and, upon this subject, let us see if they believed—yea or nay—that deference to the authority of the Bible, that biblicism, in short, is the scourge of the church.

At Rome, at the end of the first century, an elder, or bishop of the church, Clement by name, probably he of whom Paul says to the Philippians, “Clement, whose name is in the book of life,” taught in that ancient city where Paul had taught in chains. Ye who seek salvation, would you know how you should proceed? Clement will tell you. “Examine with care the Scriptures;” he says in chap. xlv. of his epistle to the Corinthians, “*they are the true oracles of the Holy Spirit.* Understand that there is nothing in them either unrighteous, or false, or feigned.”

Nearly about the same time, in the beginning of the second century, in Antioch, the metropolis of the Christians who had been Pagans, as Jerusalem was that of the Christian Jews, Ignatius, a disciple of St John, shed around him the mellow lustre of the Christian virtues. Do you wish to know who they are who deny the Lord, and whom the Lord will deny? Ignatius will tell you:—“These are they,” he says, “whom neither the prophets have persuaded, nor the law of Moses, nor the gospel.”* Or if you ask for the source of truth, to which you should evermore recur, Ignatius will reply—“Run to the gospel, as being the very person of Jesus Christ—run to the apostles, as being the presbyters of the church. The gospel is the perfection of incorruptibility.”† Ignatius died a martyr for the name of Jesus Christ.

In ancient Smyrna, which claimed to have been the

* Epistle to the Smyrnians, chap. v.

† Epistle to the Philadelphians, chap. v. and ix.

birthplace of Homer, a venerable Christian, Polycarp, who was also a disciple of John, gathered many disciples around him. Do you say, I have already believed in the Lord ; but how shall I be edified from day to day in that holy faith ? Behold the reply :—“ Paul,” wrote Polycarp to the Philippians (chap. iii.), “ Paul, who perfectly taught the word of truth while he was among you, when absent wrote letters to you, which you should study, in order to be edified in the faith which is bestowed upon you.” Or, farther, would you know upon what authority you should believe the things of the invisible world ? Polycarp argues from 1 Cor. vi. 2, to prove a judgment to come :—“ Do ye not know,” he says, “ that the saints shall judge the world, as Paul has taught ? ” *

But let us proceed. Soon after this, or towards the year 130, we come to the Apologists, who occupy the first rank at that period, and who, as doctors, were deeply versed and thorough believers in the Holy Scriptures. One of them was Justin, born at Sichem, and long celebrated as a philosopher. About the year 140, he assembled those Christians at Rome who spoke Greek, to explain the Word to them in the bath-house where he resided. Do you inquire of Justin, and Tatian, his disciple, how we are born again ? They will reply, that it is by the reading of the Holy Scriptures that men become Christians.† The Holy Scripture was their mother ! “ Things so lofty,” said Justin again, “ could not be known by human thought, but only by means of a heavenly gift, which descended upon holy men. They had

* *Sicut Paulus docet*, chap. xi.

† *Justin*, *Dial. c. Tripl. o. 7*; *Tatian*, *Orat. contra Græcos*, 29.

need neither of eloquence according to the rules of art, nor of ingenious means of disputing, but only passively to submit their pure souls to the influence of the Divine Spirit. As a bow drawn across a lyre produces tones, so God employed those holy men as instruments to make us acquainted with celestial things."* Justin died a martyr for the name of Jesus Christ.

It was about that period, a little before, and a little after it, that the famous Gnostics arose, especially in the East. Without explaining their heresy, I will only say, that whilst modern doctors have denied the divinity of Christ, many Gnostics denied the truth of his humanity. Some illustrious doctors opposed them, and especially Irenæus and Tertullian, about the year 180.

At that period, say some, Catholicism arose, and invented the notion, unknown till then, regarding the authority of Scripture! But you have seen, my brethren, that that was already the opinion of Jesus Christ, of the apostles, and the doctors who followed them. As well might we affirm, it seems to me, that one of the printers of this city has just discovered the art of printing, which has been known since the time of Guttemberg, or that one of the numerous emigrants who leave our Switzerland has just discovered America. How will you dispose of such things?

What! Irenæus, Tertullian, and others, invent the authority of the Scriptures against the Gnostics! How then would men so distinguished by their intelligence as some of the Gnostics—how would Heraclion, for example, and Marcion, take so much trouble, and that

* Cohortat. ad Gentes, cap. 8.

a trouble so useless, to make the writings of St John, and St Luke, and St Paul, speak in their favour, if the Scriptures had not then enjoyed, in the eyes of all parties, an authority which it was impossible to decline?

If the orthodox doctors had adopted that invention to silence their adversaries, how should we have seen all the Gnostic doctors pointing out the dishonest manœuvre? But they never harboured the thought. That Scriptural proof, which was so troublesome to them, had been so established by Jesus Christ and his apostles, that the Gnostics themselves sought to employ it in favour of their doctrines.

And when they saw that they could not accomplish their object, know ye what they did? They said, what has recently been said, that Jesus Christ and his apostles *accommodated* themselves to the prejudices of their contemporaries. “The Gnostics,” says Neander, “are the fathers of the doctrine of accommodation in the Christian Church.”* A beautiful origin, no doubt! For our part, we have no desire to borrow our theological precedents from the doctors of the Ogdoas, of the Abraxas, of the Bythos, of the Syzygies, of the Jaldabaoth, and all such endless reveries.

Yet there is a degree of truth in the assertion which we combat. Yes, it was certainly then that *Catholicism* began to be formed. But which Catholicism was it? It was real Catholicism—that which you and I know well—the system which combats the sovereign authority which we claim for the Word of God—the human doctrine which places tradition above scripture.

Perhaps you will be curious to learn how Catholicism

* K. G. ii. p. 665.

began in the church? I have occasion to point that out by the way.

The Gnostics, perceiving that their scriptural arguments did not serve their purpose, had recourse to pretended secret traditions, which came down to them, they said, from the apostles.

And how did the orthodox doctors then proceed? To these secret traditions they opposed the public teaching of the church. Against the dreaming and the Gnostic spirit, they invoked the historical spirit as exhibited by actions. But these Christian doctors did not rest there. They had two links in their reasoning against the Gnostics and other heretics. They said to them first, Behold, you stand alone; the entire church thinks differently from you! But they hastened to add, What the church holds is demonstrated to be true by Holy Scripture. Scripture was then always the supreme authority upon which faith reposed.

Still, my brethren, that procedure, natural as it was, sufficed to originate Catholicism. The church and tradition, it is true, were placed by the Christian doctors below Scripture. But, trace the ages as they pass, and you will soon see them placed *above* it. At the same time, if Catholicism—that is, the principle opposed to that which we defend—began in the second century, it had only a feeble beginning. Scripture continued the majestic tree, which reared its boughs towards heaven; and in its branches the birds of all the earth made their nests. The bad seed—that traditional germ which an imprudent hand dropped into the ground—appeared at first only like a feeble shrub, and some hundreds of years were needed before that shrub, shooting forth its branches,

overshadowed the majestic tree beside which it was planted. Around these two trees—Scripture on the one hand, Tradition on the other—the families of Christianity are grouped. But, between them, there wander some adventurous spirits, who, rightfully disowning the traditional authority of man, and unhappily refusing to submit to the scriptural authority of God, roam hither and thither without any shelter at all. But, let us continue our journey over centuries.

Soon after the Gnostics, about the year 180, at Lyons, on the banks of the river whose waters flow through our beautiful lake, there was found a disciple of Polycarp—Irenæus. Would you know what you must do, if you love the truth? “Urge yourselves forward,” Irenæus will tell you, “by the daily study of the things which are taught in the Scriptures.”* And if you ask some one to point out the dangers which you should shun, Irenæus will reply, “That the great danger is to abandon the Scriptures, dictated by the Word and the Spirit of God.” “Leaving, in that case, the true, the certain, the indubitable,” he will continue, “and devoid of reason in yourselves, you will be precipitated into great dangers.”† Alas! yes, we know it! Irenæus died a martyr for the name of Jesus.

About the same time, or towards the close of the second century, at Alexandria, in Egypt, the first city in the world, next to Rome, near Pompey’s pillar, and Cleopatra’s needles, Clement, an elder of the church, taught the young, and all who had become Christians. Would you know how heretics are produced? Upon that

* *Advers. Hæreses*, lib. ii. cap. 46.

† *Valde precipitantium se in periculum.*

point, Clement thinks with Jesus. “Men become heretics,” he says, “when they do not submit to the Scriptures. It must necessarily happen,” he continues, “that they who approach such great matters shall fall very far, unless they hold the canon of truth which they have received from the truth itself.”*

But you will say, In what does heresy, the *essence* of heresy, consist? Clement of Alexandria will inform you.

Heresy, according to him, consists not in this or that error, but in seeking within ourselves the reason for believing, while we abandon the authority of the Scriptures. He says: “Even as we say of almonds, that they are empty, not only when we speak of those in which there is nothing, but also of those which contain only what is worthless; in the same way we call those men heretics who are devoid of the counsels of God and the teaching of Christ, and who, though bitter as a wild almond, are the chiefs and the authors of their own dogmas.”† Clement does not wish us to be the chiefs, the *Exarchs* of our doctrines: Scripture alone should be that.

Know ye what will happen, according to that Egyptian doctor, if you put away from you the authority of the Scriptures? “You will be,” says Clement, “like wicked boys who chase their master out of school.” We know why wicked boys do that.

Finally, would you know the change which would be produced in you, did you abandon the authority of Scripture? Clement of Alexandria will tell you farther:

* Τον κακονον της ἀληθειας.—Clem. Opp. p. 756.

† Ibid. p. 759.

"It will happen to you," he says, "as it happened to those who were drugged by the poison of Circe." Circe, you know, was a famous sorceress among the Pagans, who, it is said, changed the companions of Ulysses into wolves, and bears, and other beasts, by a potion which she made them drink. "In the same manner," continues Clement, "he who abandons the authority of Scripture, from a man, becomes a beast.* But, on the contrary," he adds, "he who, returning from his error, obeys the Scriptures, and trusts his life to the truth, is changed, in a manner, from a man into a god." Thus, according to the illustrious doctor of Alexandria, you see the alternative—from a man to a beast, or from a man to God !

Among the disciples of Clement at Alexandria, we find a young child before the couch where his father Leonidas had been wont to pray while he slept. When the lad had reached his sixteenth year, his father was cast into prison, and as he wished to go and share his martyrdom, his mother was obliged to conceal his clothes. Origen—that was his name—became the most learned doctor of the church, and the founder of criticism and exegesis. Now, he venerated the Holy Scriptures as the authentic and infallible Word of God. Do you ask—Upon what shall we rest our knowledge ? Origen will reply, "No where but on the words of Christ himself." Do you ask again—"What must we understand by the Word of Christ ?" The great doctor will reply to you, "Not merely those words by which Christ taught when he was made man. Even before that, as the *Word of God*, Christ was in Moses and

* Οργειον γενοίσθαι.

the prophets. But, moreover, after his ascension, Jesus spoke by his apostles, according to the saying of Paul—“ Do ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me ?”*

“ In the search after these great matters,” says he, farther, “ let us not rest satisfied with any common opinions, but let us take the testimony of the Scriptures,—both in the Old Testament and the New, which we believe to be divine—to prove what we assert.”

Finally, I cannot refrain from quoting a passage which I will take in preference, not like the others from Origen’s own writings, but from those of a learned and pious doctor of our own time, Neander, who cites it with praise.

If any one wishes to know, says Neander, how faith in a divine Spirit, breathing throughout the Scripture, had taken possession of Origen, and how convinced he was that that Spirit is not communicated except to the humble and the believing heart, let him read these words, which express that conviction with so much beauty—“ We must believe that not a word of Holy Scripture is devoid of the wisdom of God; for He who said to man, ‘ No one shall appear before me empty,’ with greater reason would himself say nothing that is empty; and the prophets, as they tell us, received of his fulness. It is for that reason that there is every where an influence which emanates from that plenitude, and there is nothing in the prophets, in the law, in the gospel, or in the apostolic letters, which does not flow from that original. That influence which comes from the fulness of God is manifested to those who have eyes to see the revelation of the divine fulness, ears to hear it, or the

* 2 Cor. xiii. 3.

sense of smelling to feel the perfume. But should it at any time happen to you in reading the Scriptures, to meet with a thought which is a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence to you, then blame thyself! Do not despair; be assured that that rock of offence embodies such thoughts as shall fulfil the saying, ‘He who believes shall not be confounded.’ Believe first, and thou shalt find that what appeared an offence to you, is great gain.”*

If, from Egypt, we proceed to another part of Africa, we shall find at Carthage, in the middle of the third century, a zealous minister, Cyprian, who adhered somewhat too closely to external unity. Nevertheless, do you ask him, When my wisdom fails me, when counsel, when life fails me, what must I do? Cyprian replies, that you must go to the *Scriptures*. “If an aqueduct,” he says, “where the water formerly flowed in abundance be suddenly dried, do not men go to the fountain?”† He died a martyr for the name of Jesus Christ.

But in proportion as we advance over centuries, light and life begin to decrease in the church. Why? Because the torch of Scripture begins to be obscured, and the deceptive lights of human authorities begin to replace it. After that the Emperor Constantine, about the beginning of the fourth century, had stretched the sceptre of his power over the church, the evil increased in magnitude. But, just as a lamp, when about to expire, suddenly spreads a vivid light, just as man, a little before he dies, appears sometimes to return to life, in

* Neander, K. Gesseh. iii. 950. See Origen, Hom. ii. in Jerem.

† Cyp. Epist. 74.

the same way the great principle of the authority of the Scriptures established by Jesus Christ, before it was extinguished in darkness by the barbarians, emitted bright lights once more.

About the end of the fourth century, there was found at Bethlehem, near the place where the Saviour was born, a presbyter, Jerome, the rival of Origen in biblical knowledge. “It is *the teaching of the Spirit*,” he said, “which is transmitted to us in the canonical books,—if the councils have established aught that is contrary to them, I reckon it an impiety.”* “If any one speak without the authority of the Scriptures,” he continues, “it is only prating, which deserves no confidence.”† “All that has not the authority of the Scriptures on its side,” says he, finally, “may be *despised* as easily as proved.”‡

At the same time, we find as the patriarch of Constantinople, a pious and zealous man—named the Golden Mouth—Chrysostom. You perhaps say, “Amid the many voices which we hear, which must I believe?” “I implore, and I beseech you,” replies the Golden Mouth, “to *shut your ears to every other voice*, and to follow *as your rule the canon of Holy Scripture*.”§ Elsewhere he says upon Psalm xcv., “If any thing be affirmed without Scripture, the mind of the hearer remains undecided. But if it be from Scripture that the voice proceeds, the discourse of him who speaks, and the mind of him who listens, are equally established.”

* “Nefas duco.”—Ep. ad Galat.

† “Garrulitas non habet fidem.”—Ep. ad Titum.

‡ “Eadem facilitate contemnitur qua probatur.”—In Matt. xxiii.

§ Hom. xiii. upon Genesis.

About the same time, a celebrated bishop, Augustine, taught at Hippo, in Africa. Do you say, my brethren, But after all, who is the author of the Holy Scripture ? Augustine will teach you. " All Scripture," he will tell you, " was written by the fingers of God—that is to say, by the Holy Spirit who filled the men of God."* Do you say, When we assemble for discussion with those who hold a different opinion, what must we do ? Augustine will teach you. " Let us remove from among us," he will tell you, " all our papers and all our books, and let the Book of God be alone brought forward.† Hear Christ speaking. Hear the truth teaching—Let us no more hear, ' I say this,' ' I say that ;' but let us hear, ' *The Lord* says these things.' "

" Will some one ask me, Why do you wish us to put away our books from among us ? I reply, Because I do not wish men to prove any thing by human documents, but by the oracles of God. Read to us this from the law, this from the prophets, this from the Psalms, from the Gospel, from the Epistles of the Apostles. *Read, and we believe.*"‡

But, you will say, Augustine was a Catholic. I will answer—In that case, it appears that there are Catholics of very different kinds ; for hear what Augustine said : " It is not necessary to think with the Catholic bishops, if they hold any thing contrary to the canonical Scriptures of God."§ Would to God that many

* Aug. Opera, iv. 31.

† " Auferantur e medio chartæ nostræ, procedat in medium Codex Dei."—In Ps. lvii.

‡ " Legite . . . et credamus."—De Unitate Eccles., ch. vi.

§ " Ne Catholicis Episcopis consentiendum est."—De Unitate Eccles. ch. x.

Catholics were to think thus, and even many Protestants, who are much less Protestant than Augustine regarding this fundamental principle of Protestantism.

Here, my brethren, we must pause: the wild tree has grown, and already its branches are about to overshadow the beautiful tree of the Scriptures. The torch of the oracles of God, which Jesus Christ had kindled, and which his disciples had faithfully held, is more and more obscured, and is about to be almost extinguished in the world. And what will happen then? What happens! When the sun is concealed, darkness covers the earth. Truth departs, life departs, holiness departs, love departs, hope departs, order departs, peace departs, the freedom of the churches of Christ departs—all, all departs, because the authority of the Word of God is gone. No doubt, there were still other causes which contributed to the darkness; but I do not hesitate to say, that the principal cause was, that a veil was then thrown over the Holy Scripture—over its divine authority. We have, after that, the middle ages, with their barbarities, their fooleries, and their horrors. There are still many theologians—one is called the *most subtle* doctor; another, the *most irrefragable* doctor; a third, the *most wonderful* doctor; but none of them at all is the *most scriptural* doctor. They never think of studying, of explaining, of circulating the Holy Scripture. Their fort is dialectics, and it is by philosophy that they try to mould theology. Such, my brethren, will be the darkness—such will be the disorders—such will be the barbarism—into which, with the aid of other deleterious doctrines widely spread in our day, men will forthwith plunge Christianity, if they succeed in the

audacious attempt to deprive us of the light of heaven —the divine authority of the Holy Scripture of the Lord.

At the same time, amid that dark night of the middle ages, some sparks were here and there preserved, and even in places the most benighted, we see sudden lights from time to time appearing. Whence come they? Always from the fact that some men, guided by the Holy Spirit, have seized the torch of the Scriptures when nearly extinguished, and, waving it in the air, have fanned the flame again.

In the lowly valleys of the Alps, to the north of Mount Viso, and near the sources of the Po, some simple Christians live during the middle ages, who preserve the essential traditions of the primitive church. Ask them what he who has not the truth should do to attain to it—

“Regarde l’Escriptura del fin commençzament.”

“Let him study the Scripture from commencement to close.”

Insist upon some error, and see how they combat it—

“Ma l’Escriptura di, e nos creire o deven.”

“But the Scripture says, and that we should obey.” *

A rich merchant, Peter Waldo, appeared during the twelfth century in the superstitious city of Lyons, and

* *La Noble Leçon.* See verses 19, 23, 236, 287, &c. There is scarcely a page where these words are not found:—“Ma l’ Escriptura di.” The Confession of Faith of the ancient Vaudois, which bears the date 1120, says, “Nos reconten per Sanctas Scripturas canonicas, li libres de la S. Bibla.” Then follows the catalogue of all our holy books. There is preserved in the library of Cambridge a Vaudois MS., entitled “Sola Dei lege Scripta definiti fidei controversia.”

many souls among all people were led by his means to the knowledge of Christ. Will you say to him, How didst thou accomplish that? He will reply to you, "I selected a learned priest and a young secretary. The priest translated and dictated the Scriptures in the vulgar tongue; the young man wrote them. When I had thus obtained the books of the Bible, I caused them to be copied, and I had them circulated, explained, preached." Will you ask, And what did Rome do? "Ah! Rome," he will reply, "by the Archbishop of Lyons, forbade us to explain the Scriptures (*ne intromitterent se de Scripturis exponendis*)."^{*} And the famous Pope Innocent III. declared that, "as every beast which touched the mountain was to be punished with death, every layman was interdicted (*simplex aliquis et indoctus*) from touching the Holy Scripture." That arrogant and cruel Pope believed that biblicism was the scourge of the church.

A doctor, John Wickliffe, appears in England in the fourteenth century, and spreads a bright light, which continues even till the Reformation. Do you ask him to tell you the principle by which he dissipated the darkness? He will answer you—"Here it is. No writing has any authority or weight, except in so far as the thought which it expresses proceeds from the Holy Scripture."^{*} Do you say to him, And how did you act? "I translated the Holy Scripture into the English tongue," he will reply, "so that women, laymen, know it better now than some priests and learned men. But the priests cried out, 'It is heresy to speak of the Holy Scripture in English.'" They did not like biblicism.

* "Nisi de quanto sua sententia a Scriptura sacra sit derivata."—*Lib. quat. Dialog.*

A powerful preacher, John Huss, preaches in the Free Oratory of Bethlehem, at Prague, in Bohemia, about the commencement of the fifteenth century. The priests burned him alive at Constance ; but he was the instrument of God in circulating a Christian vitality which continued till the Reformation—or rather, which continues still. Do you approach his funeral pile, and ask him what is, in his opinion, the foundation of faith ? “ Every Christian,” he will tell, “ is bound to believe every truth which the Holy Spirit has deposited in the Scripture.”*

You see, then, that at all times, and in every place, wherever there was light and life, there men had the Scriptures. In all ages—even in the middle ages themselves, wherever the Scripture was, there was also evangelical Christianity—Christian Protestantism. It began with Jesus Christ, and has never entirely disappeared from the earth.

II. We come now to the second grand epoch, the most important for humanity, next to that of the advent of the Son of God—the Reformation.

As some have pretended that the divine authority of the Scriptures was not an original and fundamental principle of Christianity, they have also assured us that it was not an original and fundamental principle of the Reformation. Men have said that the Holy Scriptures were not regarded at the commencement of that renovation of the church, as an authority in matters of faith, and that it is to an accident that we owe the more

* “ Tenetur quilibet Christianus credere omnem veritatem quam S. Spiritus posuit in Scriptura.”—Tractatus de Ecclesia.

recent introduction of that principle. Might we not say that these two grand dispensations of God—primitive Christianity and the Reformation—have been stretched upon the iron bed of an inexorable system, and that as they were much longer than it, men have cut off their feet, as Procustes did? The most certain result of that dangerous operation will be to hinder these two grand dispensations from moving.

What are the principles of the Reformation? All the evangelical theologians agree to signalize two.

There is, first of all, the principle called material, but which should rather be called essential, because it is the essence, the very substance of the doctrine of the Reformers. That principle is faith in Jesus Christ who was dead and is alive again, and justification by that faith. Salvation comes by living faith in Christ the Redeemer, and not by works. Christ is “the wisdom, the righteousness, the sanctification, and redemption” of his people. “There is salvation in none other.” Behold the essential principle!

But there is another principle—a formative, or *formal* principle—that is to say, one which formed evangelical doctrine. What is it?

This is the place, my brethren, of the second palpable error of which I spoke to you last Lord’s day. Some say that the Reformation began without asserting the authority of the Scriptures; but that, having come into collision with Anabaptism, in order to combat it, the Reformation established that principle, to the great detriment of the religious movement and of Christian spirituality. Before that heresy, it has been said, the Reformation furled its sails. The Anabaptists play the same

part in history regarding this point, as the Gnostics regarding the other.

The graveness of this error can be compared only with that which makes the doctrine of Jesus Christ regarding Scripture an invention of *Catholicism* in the second century.

It would have been singular (let us remark it in passing) if the Reformation had established the authority of Scripture to combat Anabaptism—a doctrine which, you know, would have us to confer baptism, not upon little children, but only upon adults who profess the faith. However decided I may be for the baptism of infants, it is yet necessary for me clearly to acknowledge that the express command—“Baptize infants,” is found in no part of the gospel. And men have entirely changed the nature of the Reformation to be able to draw from Scripture—what? Declarations which are not found there at all! But, let us not pause at *a priori* considerations—let us judge, not according to our fancy, and the exigencies of our system, but according to authentic documents—according to facts, for this is a point of history.

The *formative* principle of evangelical Christianity is found in the very cradle of the Reformation. It lies at the foundation of the famous Theses by which Luther began the new era in 1517. In fact, if indulgences be the great evil which he combats, the Word of God is the great good which he opposes to them. He complains (Thesis 54) that men occupy more time in announcing an indulgence than the Word of God; and in the very protestation which Luther appended to his Theses, and where he lays down the theological and Christian b:s's upon

which he rests, the reformer declares (five years before the first Anabaptists), “that he is not so arrogant as to prefer his opinions to those of all others, but at the same time, that he is not so devoid of understanding as to place the *divine Word* under the fables invented by human reason.” Thus to put the Word of God uppermost—behold Luther’s first step! It is by that Word of God that he will do battle against all the fables. This decides, from the outset, the reformer’s point of view.

The adversaries of Scripture understood him at once; and thus Tetzel, terrified by the presumption which pretends to place the Word of God *above all*, says, in the seventeenth of his Theses, published in reply to those of Luther, “It is necessary to teach Christians that the church maintains as certain articles of catholic truth, many points *which are not found in the collection of the Holy Scripture.*” This is clear, my brethren. The venders of indulgences set little value upon the canon—the collection of the Holy Scripture.

From the first moment of the Reformation, the two principles are thus confronted. We have, on the one side, the Papacy placing the Church above, and Scripture beneath; on the other, the Reformation putting Scripture above, and the Church beneath. Let us proceed.

You are next to see how this man of God will successively overthrow all the earthly authorities which formed the foolish confidence of man, and how he will exalt to a proper place the holy authority of the Scripture of God;—how, plucking up by the roots the heath which grows in the wilderness (according to the expression of the prophet), he will substitute for it a strong

and fertile tree planted near a river of water. Never, perhaps, did so feeble a power engage in a struggle with might so gigantic—never was a victory so prodigious, so courageously and completely won. This is more wonderful than the three hundred men of Gideon beating the thousands of Midian, or than the sling of David overthrowing the giant Goliath.

The first authority which the Reformer, supported by the verdict of the Bible, overthrows, is that of the famous scholastics:—"I reserve for myself, as a privilege conferred by Christian liberty," he says, in August 1518, "the power to accept or reject the mere opinions of Thomas Aquinas, of Bonaventure, and other doctors of the schools, according to the precept of the apostle Paul, 'Prove all things: hold fast that which is good.'" The same will forthwith be the lot of the Pope.

Following up his conference at Augsburg with the legate De Vio, Luther took this new step. At the close of 1518 he published a protestation in which he entirely abandoned the Papal authority. "The Pope," he says, "can *err*, can *sin*, can *lie*, like any other man." You hear that—*Lie!*—of that high priest—regarded as the vicar of God, and by many as God himself—Luther, supported by the authority of Scripture, declares, he can *err*, he can *lie*! This is an enormous step!

Luther had the right to take it. He advanced in spite of himself, and the light became always more disengaged from the darkness in his mind. In the famous dispute at Leipsic with Dr Eck, three years before the first Anabaptists, the Reformer arrives at perfect clearness as to the fountain of religious knowledge. He says (Disput. Acta), on the 5th of July 1519, "We can-

not constrain any Christian to believe any thing, *except by the Holy Scripture*, which is properly the divine right." He repeats, "It is by *divine right* forbidden to believe any thing which cannot be *proved* by the Holy Scripture, or by a certain revelation." For Luther, the contents of Scripture are equal to a sure, a real revelation, of which he now appears not to have wished to deny the possibility.

The instant that he discovered the authority of the Scripture of God, Luther is free—for you know it, and a servant of God* said it to us in this chapel, a little before his death—"Without obedience there is no liberty." Luther was emancipated from all human tuition by the authority of the Word of God. His religious life is reinforced, his spirituality increases, his courage becomes an hundredfold greater, and the Christian movement is about to make great advances. This new conviction of the servant of God is expressed with power. Upheld by the Scripture of God, he strikes to the right, he strikes to the left; he brushes away all those reeds which have grown around the rock of God, and concealed it so long from the eyes of the faithful. He prostrates all the false authorities, like Dagon before the ark of the Eternal.

He betakes himself first to the universities, whose voice, especially that of the University of Paris, was as much venerated by many as the voice of the Pope himself. In his *Lutheran Resolutions* regarding the propositions of Leipsic, he cries, "that he wishes to be free like a Christian theologian, and that the power of an university shall not hinder him from confessing what he knows to be truth."

* M. Vinct.

After these learned bodies, he attacks the councils, which he had himself invoked; and brandishing above them the club of the Scriptures, he gives them a terrible blow. “ If a single council has once been deceived,” says he, “ all may have been deceived. If they have erred in a single article, even by that their whole authority falls.” And he writes ironically to Latomus, in 1521, a little more than a year before the first Anabaptists, “ What Holy Scripture has that council on its side? If a council can exist without the Scripture, and if it be enough that the tonsure and the hats of bishops be assembled, why do we not go into the churches, take the images of wood and of stone, and then, collecting them together, and putting the hats and the bonnets of priests upon their heads, why do we not form in this manner a beautiful universal council?”

After the turn of the councils and the universities comes that of the traditions and the fathers. “ A Christian controversy,” says Luther, in his reply to Emser, in 1521, about a year before the first Anabaptists, “ should be founded upon *Scripture*. We need not avail ourselves of the teaching of the fathers, except to arrive at *the Scripture*—as they come thither themselves—and then allow the Holy Scripture to exist alone.”

The reformer is not contented with making this declaration to the theologians—he makes it to Charles V. himself.

On the 28th of April 1521, on the occasion of his citation to Worms, he writes to that emperor:—“ I am perfectly ready to accept and sustain the judgment, without making any reservation whatever, except *the Word*

of God alone—that clear, transparent Word, which is not subject to any one, but which has a just title to be placed above every thing, and to continue the judge of all men.”

Finally: when he is led captive into the castle of the Wartburg, how does he conduct himself? He knows that if he would spread evangelical Christianity among his people, he must spread the New Testament. He knows that a testimony from God is needed to put to silence all those testimonies of men which rise up against the truth—and he sets himself to translate the Holy Scriptures.

Thus, Luther has discarded all other authorities to exalt that of God in his Scripture. Never was so great a revolution accomplished in the kingdom of mind. All this, be it well observed, was done before the Anabaptists arose. I pause in these citations a year before them.

Beyond a doubt, Luther might sometimes be in error; but you see now whether the Reformation did not begin by re-establishing the authority of the Scriptures!

Martin Luther was not alone. The principles reasserted by him are placed in the same rank by Melancthon. In his Defence against Eck, in August 1519, three years before the Anabaptists, Melancthon, the theologian of the Reformation, laid down this beautiful principle, which is the foundation of evangelical Christianity: “There is only one Scripture, inspired by Heaven, pure, truthful in all things, which is called canonical.” And he adds: “It is given to us on purpose that we may compare with it, as with a touchstone, the sentences and decrees of men.”

The famous *Loci Communes* of Melancthon, which formed the first dogmatic theology of the evangelical church, are a constant invitation to study the Scripture. The Holy Scripture is there regarded by the author as an image of the Divinity, according to which it is necessary to mould the Christian life. “Whoever,” he says, “derives Christianity from any other source than canonical Scripture, is deceived.”*

In Switzerland, Zwingli does the same ; he seems to have recognised the grand principle before Luther. In 1516, a long time before the Anabaptists, he explained the Scripture, we are told, “not by the fables of men, but only by comparing the holy Biblical Scriptures with themselves.” Having arrived at Zurich in 1519, he tells the Chapter that he would first explain the gospel of St Matthew, “exclusively from the sources of the Holy Scripture.”

In 1523, when the vicar of Constance proposed to refer the subject of the first religious conference to the Universities of Paris, of Cologne, or Louvain, “That is not necessary,” replied Zwingli ; “we have already an impartial and infallible judge : it is in the Holy Scripture. It can neither lie nor deceive.” And when an adversary wished to appeal to the fathers, he replied, “We are not treating here either of fathers or of mothers, but of what is truly in accordance with the Word of God.”†

And in 1520, before the Anabaptists arose, what was the grand wish of Tyndale, the reformer of England ?

* “Fallitur quisquis aliunde Christianismi formam petit quam a Scriptura Canonica.”

† Opp. i. 119.

What was it that originated in his mind the design to translate the Scriptures? He had begun to spread evangelical truth by conversations and preachings; but scarcely had he planted the Word, when the priests came and tore it up. "I cannot be every where," he said; "oh, if Christians had the Holy Scripture translated into their mother tongue, they could themselves resist the priests. Without the Bible, it is impossible to maintain the truth."*

Finally, Calvin, our great theologian, is of the same opinion. According to him (in his Letter to Cardinal Sadolet), the Word of God alone lies beyond the sphere of our judgment. And in the "Antidote to the Articles of the Theological Faculty of Paris," he says:—"If any controversy arise, it must not be decided according to the pleasure of men, but by the sole authority of God. Since the world is now in great trouble, owing to the diversity of opinions, there is no other remedy; we must seek our refuge in the Scripture." Alas! it is still the same!

Such, then, was the principle established throughout the Reformation—the sovereign and exclusive authority of Scripture.

Yes, my brethren, beware lest you believe that Luther and the reformers only piled ruins upon ruins around them, as the disciples of the Pope pretend. Before them, the Schoolmen mutilated; behind them, the Pope overthrown; to the right, the Universities beholding their oracles rejected; to the left, the Traditions torn in pieces; all around, the Councils dethroned—ruins! ruins every where! Ah! if what is now said

* Tyndale's Works, i. 3.

were true ; if the divine Scripture were not the sovereign and sole authority in matters of faith, the Romanists might say, Ruins ! every where ruins ! But know ye, O disciples of the Pope ! what Luther and the reformers resemble ? They are like a valiant general long shut up in a fortress by the rebel subjects of his king, long surrounded by their trenches, their fosses, their lines of approach, and their parallels, and who suddenly sallies with power from the walls, throws himself upon the enemy, demolishes their lines, spreads ruin through their trenches, breaks up their mines, chases the enemy on every side, re-establishes the legitimate authority, and plants over all the glorious standard of his king.

If Luther overthrew the authority of man, it was only to exalt the authority of God. No doubt, he did not overlook certain difficulties which Scripture presents, regarding which men now make much noise, and on account of which they propose to Christendom to abandon the divine testimony on which our faith reposes. Difficulties ! Certainly they exist every where, even in life ; yet that was never a reason for committing suicide. "There are here," said Luther, upon John ii. 13-16, "some chronological questions which I have no wish to resolve. That is of little importance, even though there are some people among us whose mind is so acute and so subtle, that they are often pleased to put forward all sorts of questions, and desire us to take the trouble of answering all that passes through their head."

What ! the Bible is a book entirely human, and, at the same time, as entirely divine ; and should it present

no difficulty to us? As there is an union of the divine and the human nature, there is a mystery; and as there is a mystery, there are things which we cannot comprehend and explain. The God-man presents to us unfathomable depths; and should the Bible present none? Ah! it would not then be the Word with the two natures. There is certainly one way of escaping from the mystery, and disembarassing it from difficulties; that is, by suppressing one of the two natures. Does the man-God confound you? Well! Take away godhead from Jesus, says one, and make him only man. Does the Scripture of God embarrass you? Well! take away the divine and infallible Word from the Bible, adds another, and leave only a human word, a little more holy than others, like the Jesus of Socinus. As for me, may God preserve me from this rather clever expedient! I like better the mystery with the difficulties, than the easy explanation without the mystery.

Let us suppose that the book of God had been given with the least possible amount of human intervention; let us suppose that there had been none; that, by a miracle, that book fell from heaven quite complete, like the letters of which the Romish superstition speaks from time to time. That book, altogether divine, once launched into the world, would be exposed to human casualties, unless we admit a perpetual miracle, which, for my part, I could not do. Incessantly recopied, and then incessantly reprinted, that book would be subjected to the literary accidents to which all books are exposed. There would be variations,—perhaps even one proper name might be put

for another, as often happens to copyists, especially when these names have some similarity to each other ; for example, Jeremiah for Zachariah. There are accidents which flow from the lapse of time, from the influence of men, and which are inevitable.

But if, even in the case of the Bible having fallen quite perfect from heaven, the traces of humanity would be inevitable, with how much more reason will they be so, since God has been pleased that it should be written upon the earth, in divers ages, in divers countries, by men of very different degrees of intelligence and culture, combining a freedom altogether human with an inspiration altogether divine ? O ye subtle spirits, of whom Luther speaks ! do you comprehend the union of the sovereign authority of God and of the liberty of man within you, yes, within yourselves ? Will you become Pelagians, to escape from the difficulty ? And if that mystery has difficulties insurmountable in you, do you wish that there should be none in the Bible !

It was not thus that Luther acted. He accepted the difficulties, and they did not embarrass his faith. "The evangelists do not observe the same order ; very well. What one puts before, another puts after ; I am satisfied. It is possible that the Lord often repeated the same narrative. But though that might be the case," added the reformer, "it in no respect does injury to faith."* After having contemplated these human properties of Scripture, Luther raised his head and contemplated their divinity. He called them "the right divine" (*das Gottliche recht*). "It is necessary," said he, against Latomus, "to consider the Scripture as having God him-

* Walch, vii. 1730.

self speaking in it." "The Holy Spirit has spoken, has written the Scripture," says he elsewhere.* "Besides it, there is no other revelation of the Holy Spirit." Finally, he calls Scripture "God himself" (*Gott selbst*), and he adds, that "however weak it may appear, it nevertheless possesses the power to make all who adhere to it the children of God."

What! did Luther advance to the field of battle like a soldier unarmed? That is a discovery at which he would have been much astonished, and against which he, though dead, protests. "It is with the sacred text," said he, "it is in setting out upon the foundation of the Holy Scripture, that I have beaten, overthrown, destroyed all my adversaries." "The devil," said he, again, "has often attacked me so fiercely, that I knew not whether I was dead or alive. But with the Word of God I defended myself against him. No other help! no other counsel! One word of God suffices for us. A word of man is only a feeble sound, which passes into the air, and perishes there; but a word of God is more grand than heaven and earth, than death and hell: it is the power of God, and it endures for ever!"†

And how did Luther know so well the power of Scripture? It was because he did not do as we do; he did not resemble those Christians, so numerous in our days, who are wearied with Scripture. "For many years," he said, "I have read the whole Bible twice each year. It is a tree," he added, "which is large, massy, and tufted, and all its words are so many branches and little boughs. There is not one of its branches, not one of its shoots,

* Walch, xviii. 1602.

† Walch, xxii. 8, 63, 54.

which I have not shaken, to discover whether any thing could be found upon it ; and I have always discovered, even on the most slender branch, two or three apples, two or three pears, which dropt into my hands." *

Go, my brethren, do likewise, and you will know the divinity of the Bible.

Yes, Luther and the other reformers did not perform a work of destruction. They overthrow—they disperse—they sweep away—but why? As architects chosen by God to rebuild his ruined house, they prepare the ground-plot—they pull up the nettles, the thorns, the poisonous plants—they remove the loose stones—they cast the decayed wood into the fire, but it is with the design of laying in their place the *living Rock* of the city of God.

My brethren, we accept that beautiful comparison of the nascent reformation to a ship launched upon the sea, and wafted with full sails. But wait—let us closely inspect it—adjust your glass with care, that you may distinctly see; let us ascertain what the sails really are? At the mainmast? The Scripture! At the foremast? The Scripture! At the mizenmast? The Scripture! At all the yards? The Scriptures—always the Scriptures! And then the breeze of the Holy Spirit descends from heaven, blows upon all these sails, and propels the vessel—behold the sails of the Reformation.† These

* Walch, xxii. 61.

† In the French there are two words, *Reforme* and *Reformation*, used to describe the great spiritual emancipation of the sixteenth century. They are nearly synonymous, and often used indiscriminately. The one, however, *Reformation*, means the work by which the result was produced. The other, *Reforme*, means the result itself.—TR.

sails she has never furled, and she will not furl them for ever.

Last Lord's day we presented to you the testimony of God regarding the authority of the Holy Scripture—today we have reminded you of the testimony of men.

But if I say *of men*, am I not in some degree in error? Without doubt, the testimonies of the Son and of the Spirit alone are divine proofs; but there is also a testimony of God in the declarations of his servants—the testimony of Christ in history—the testimony of the Holy Spirit in the heart of those men who have achieved the most in the work of the Lord. In all ages attacks have been made against the authority and inspiration of the Word of God; but these attacks have never come but from the unbelieving or the superstitious. The living church of God has been unanimous in proclaiming that inspiration, and submitting to that authority, so that we might address this new error in the proverbial saying, “Tell me your company, and I will tell you yourself.”

If I admit the intervention of the Holy Spirit in each believer, I admit that intervention also in the entire number of true believers. I have the conviction “that the church was assisted by the Holy Spirit in determining the elements of the Scriptural rule.”* I believe that the church produced by the living Word of God had a spirit of discernment, a relish for truth, in virtue of which it recognised the writings of the apostles; and I think that even now, wherever the true church is found—that is to say, men taught by God—the Holy Scriptures evi-

* *Prolegomenes de Dogmatique Reformée*, par Edmond Scherer, p. 45.

dence themselves, and prove that they are the very Word of God. The church, in thus recognising the Scriptures of God, does not perform an act of authority, as the Romish Church pretends—she performs an act of obedience. She does not place herself above Scripture, but below it. If there be a church which sets itself above the Word of God, it proclaims by that very acting that the power which it arrogates is illegitimate. It is not from the existing Catholic Church that we hold the Scriptures—it is not from the Council of Trent, which places the Apocrypha and tradition on the same level with them—no ; it is from that primitive church, which was an evangelical church and not a Romish church—from that church of the confessors and the martyrs, which was the original of our church, and not the original of the church of the Pope. Protestantism being only resistance to error, and especially to the error which is opposed to the Scriptures, it has existed at all times ; but it has existed above all, and it exists still, wherever the Scripture, its study, its interpretation, its defence, its propagation have held, or hold the first rank. It will fall along with Scripture.

So very far is the Romish Church from being the mother from whom we receive the Scripture, that, on the contrary, her great fault, her great act of rebellion, has been to displace divine inspiration, and transfer it from the Scriptures to the clergy. The church of the Pope, during the middle ages, did not distinctly deny the inspiration of the Scriptures ; but she was little concerned about it—she was contented to affirm that the Holy Spirit was present in the church representative—in the Pope and the priests. If the Pope and the priests

were inspired, it was sufficiently indifferent whether the Scriptures were or were not so. The pontifical church could entirely abandon the oracles of God, since she had made herself these oracles. The Pope is the Bible of the Papists; and that pretence annuls the true Bible, almost as much as the denial of inspiration which we combat at this hour.

The movement of the Reformation was precisely the reverse of that of the Papacy. It also displaced inspiration, but mark what it did—it took it from the visible and hierarchical church, where the pretensions to inspiration were only an illusion incessantly contradicted by facts, and restored it to the Holy Scriptures where God had put it.

Whilst the Romish Church is founded upon the Holy Spirit, who, it says, speaks in the Councils and the Popes, the evangelical church is founded upon the Holy Spirit, who speaks in the Scriptures. Upon what would a new church be founded, did men pretend to found one? Upon individualism, will some one say? “But it has been asserted, that between individualism and authority there is nothing.” Ah, my brethren, it is a long time, it is ages, since men sought to build something upon mere individualism; but it has happened that the stone which one individual laid, another individual overthrew, so that the structure was in no haste to be raised. Every church built upon man and his individualism, will creep along the earth for ever.

At the same time, my brethren, there is a Christian individualism which is necessary. Each one of you should receive the authority and divinity of the Scriptures among his individual convictions. Every one of

you is a member of that church which, by the help of the Holy Spirit, receives the Scriptures of God with respect and submission. It is not enough that so many men of God, at the commencement of Christianity, and then of the Reformation, have been witnesses proclaiming the grand truth of the divinity and the power of the Scriptures: it is necessary, in our day, that you also be witnesses yourselves. A new faith, a new zeal, a testimony full of steadfastness and of life —such should be the result of trial.

But you will say perhaps, How can we, simple-minded ones, study the Holy Scriptures? Should we not fear to approach them? No, you should not; you have all—and the least among you the first—the means of testing the divine power of the Scriptures, means which are wanting to many of the learned. These means Luther himself shall describe to you.

“I did not learn my theology,” he said, “all at once. I dug, and dug always deeper. To that, my temptations and trials have led me. I have had the Pope, the universities, all the doctors, and by them, and with them, the devil, hanging about my neck. They have obliged me to save myself in the Bible, to read it, and read it again, with care; and it is thus that I have found the true meaning. If we have not trials,” he continued, “we are only ‘*theologi speculativi*,’ speculative theologians. Then, seated behind our books, in our closet, when we treat of a doctrine or a commandment, we say, ‘It must be thus, and thus,’ as the monks did in former times in their cells. But that is not the good way. It is not enough that an artist, a lawyer, a physician, have been at school. *Practice!*

practice! It is practice which is awanting in enthusiasts ; and yet it is that which renders us truly learned in the Holy Scriptures.”*

Thus spoke the reformer. See, then, what gives true knowledge. In Germany, during the time of rationalism, in order to have a reputation for learning, it was necessary to possess a little unbelief, and reject, at least, some good epistle. Strange error, my brethren ! Knowledge in divine things does not walk with unbelief ; it walks with faith.

Christians, the times are critical ! There are threatening clouds on the horizon. The doctrines of impiety agitate religion and society. Quitting the halls of certain philosophers, they walk amid the ignorant crowd, and captivate them by their novelty. And it is at the moment when there are so many attacks from without, that an attack from within begins. The Holy Scriptures, translated into so many different languages, being the means by which Christianity in our day has achieved so many magnificent triumphs, the enemy attempts to make that all-powerful weapon drop from our hands.

Ah ! very far from abandoning it, let us grasp it with greater vigour. To resist such numerous attacks, the church requires a solid rampart. Our fathers, to defend themselves against the Papal powers, built our bulwarks.† But the time when Protestantism employed such defences is past ; nay, it is not in them that men of God have ever placed their trust. What !

* Walch, xxii. 95.

† This discourse was delivered at the time when the ramparts of Geneva were beginning to be removed.

shall we defend justification through faith by a covered way ? and the divinity of Jesus Christ by a half-moon ? No ; if we be treating of faith, it is not breast-walls and counterscarps that we need : it is the holy authority, the sovereign power, of the Holy Scriptures. If an audacious hand come to lift a spade against the Scriptures of God, or to dig a mine below them, then, inhabitants of the city of God, then to arms ! The enemy is at the gate ! Advance, ye armies of the Eternal ! Pray, contend, and, rather than permit any one to touch the ramparts of the Lord, let them kill you on the spot—we must defend the Scriptures, or perish. “If we do not wish to drink of this spring water, so fresh and living,” said Luther, “God will plunge us into swamps and sloughs, and cause us there to swallow down long draughts of putrid and foetid water.”

But far from us be such a presage. Many have said, “This attack has strengthened me in the faith of the Scriptures and the knowledge of God.” Let that be the case with all. Let the testimonies from the doctors of the first ages, and the doctors of the Reformation, which I have this day quoted to you, make you especially comprehend one thing, namely, that the Holy Scriptures are not necessary merely to the ordinary believer, but are so above all to those who are appointed to teach ; and are we not all called, as St Peter says, to “show forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light ?” If it be the character of the new dispensation that “they shall be all taught of God,” let us not, in imitation of the Pope, introduce any human teaching into the church. Those who have the charge of instruction there, those

who are called ministers, or servants of the Word of God, should prove that their teaching is Christian, by deriving it from the testimony of the apostles and the prophets whom God has employed as the instruments of his revelation. If there be a salvation for the church, it is needful that the church recognise that salvation ; and in order to such a recognition, she must have a revelation from God to announce it. If there be no Word of God in the world, there is no salvation. It is necessary that a message come from heaven to earth, or never will my soul be raised from earth to heaven. Christian instruction should be founded on the Bible. Its substance should be biblical. Without that holy, without that living biblicism, we cannot have a saving communication of eternal truth.

Yes, my brethren—that is what I ask of you—biblicism is the salvation of the church. Servants of the Word of God, and private believers, we have all been remiss in this respect. It is requisite that every one begin anew the study of the Bible, as if he had never studied it before. We must not adhere simply to the grammatical or edifying interpretation of the isolated meaning of a single passage, as the Christians of our day too exclusively do ; we must examine the order, the connection of the passage—the relation of each passage of the Bible to the entire system of the Bible. We must apply ourselves to that examination, that analysis of the text of Scripture, which has for its object to discover, exactly and completely, how what is said in the Bible bears upon the wants of men. We must study the entire Bible. We must study it in the light of the Spirit of God, and of internal experience, for without that we

cannot comprehend it. We must turn the Word, and turn it again in every light. Then only will the treasures which are there concealed appear and be revealed to our soul—they will liberate it, they will strengthen it, and they will exalt it to the skies.

The study of the Bible alone makes preachers, alone colporteurs—that alone teaches the most humble believer to declare the counsel of God. For the apostles themselves there was a school of the Word of God. Doubtless the graces of Pentecost were never equalled; but those graces, bestowed on the apostles, had been prepared before, and were perhaps perfected thereafter, by the study and application of Scripture, and the words of Jesus, of which the Holy Spirit, whom they had just received, then opened the meaning to the disciples. I grant that God could, if he pleased, raise up witnesses to his grace without the Scriptures; but as a general rule, all those who, in the course of ages, have possessed the gift of preaching the Word of God with truth and power, have acquired it by the Word of the Bible. If we receive the living and effectual Word into our hearts, it transforms our natural discourse into a holy and pure address. We must have a regeneration of speech as well as of the heart, and these two regenerations are accomplished by the divine Word accompanied by the Holy Spirit. The word of the Christian cannot possess in it a germ of life—it cannot be rousing, convincing, regenerating, except in so far as it is sought in that divine Word which the Saviour calls “the seed of the kingdom.” There was a miraculous inspiration which ended with the apostles and prophets. But there is also an ordinary inspiration,

without which preaching cannot exist, and it is to communicate that to the elect of all ages that inspiration has given us the Bible. All our thoughts and all our words must be framed according to the Bible. Then shall we have a new language indeed for our new knowledge.—If some attack biblicism, it is because there is not enough of biblicism among us.

Thus, then, let all Christians inspirit themselves afresh from the Bible ; let all learn there, by the Holy Spirit, to speak with a new tongue, concerning the wonderful things of God. The Christian who keeps at a distance from the Bible, is a Christian who weakens himself ; the minister who lowers its power and authority, is a minister who breaks his sword. Do we wish to compromise the work of the Reformation ? Do we wish to promote the ruin of the church of the living God ? Ah ! weakness is wasting the church : the most eloquent, the most powerful, are grieved thereby. But do they know why the church is weak ? Because the word of the Bible is neglected there. The study of the Bible would procure for us a new Pentecost. The church would become again a sacerdotal race of servants of God—in our assemblies, and our meetings, the sacramental word of grace, blessed by the unction from on high, would reappear. What neither eloquence, nor wisdom, nor the noble and pathetic tones of the human voice could do—what the pious Christian—the most pious, by speaking of his inner experience, could not accomplish—the simple word of the Bible would achieve, according to the promise of God ; and Christians, so weak in our day, returning to the source of all power, would see that declaration fulfilled—“ They overcame by the blood of the Lamb and by *the word of their testimony.*”

DISCOURSE III.

THE TESTIMONY OF HISTORY.

"Hast thou marked the old way which wicked men have trodden ?
which were cut down out of time, whose foundation was overflowed
with a flood."—JOB xxii. 15, 16.

GENTLEMEN, AND DEAR BRETHREN,—The design of the Evangelical Society, which brings us together to-day, is not single, like that of a Bible Society, or a Society for Missions ; it is manifold. This society is occupied at once with the dissemination of the Holy Scriptures, the evangelization of souls, and the training of young Christians whom the Lord calls to be ministers of his Word. I have asked myself, Which of these different departments should mainly occupy us now ? and it appeared to me that the choice was not difficult.

In assembling you this year at this Christian festival, we have felt that it is more than ever around the Holy Scriptures of God, their inspiration, and their divine authority, that we must summon you to rally. The Lord, in permitting some events which are known to you, has himself given this indication. We accept it.

A Christian of Germany, the pious and erudite Rieger, said, "A large heart, and a strict conscience—

behold the motto of the Christian!" It is a repetition of those words of Paul, "The truth in love." We have endeavoured to follow that evangelical path in the circumstances which have torn our hearts. Some have said that we have acted too promptly—others have said that we have been too tardy. Perhaps these contradictory judgments indicate that we have acted neither too promptly nor too slowly, and we desire to do the same for the future. As to all that relates to individuals, we ask of God a large heart. We pardon the injury which has been done to us—we do not say done to us personally, but to an Institution which we hold so dear. As often as certain of those sayings are presented which pierce our souls, because they aim a blow at the Scriptures of God, we like immediately to turn our thoughts to amiable qualities, to fine talents, to sincere convictions, to soothe the wound. We have not sought even to rectify the incorrect reports which have been circulated in different places. We have kept silence, saying, like Luther, "There is need only of faith, lest the cause of faith be found without faith." We would have done still more, had conscience allowed us. Had we been treating only of secondary things, of slight shades of difference regarding the doctrine of inspiration, we would have been happy to make some sacrifices to charity, without compromising the truth. We desire that a certain liberty be preserved in theological teaching. But all liberty has its limits, which we cannot overstep without aiming a blow at the very essence of things. The question which has been agitated among us was not a question of degrees—it referred to the maintaining or the abandoning of one of the most

essential principles of evangelical Christianity — the inspiration and divine authority of the Holy Scriptures —and we could not hesitate. The twenty-one members of your General Committee have acted in the whole of this affair with the most perfect unanimity. Faithful to the principle on which we have acted, I do not desire to address you here upon what has passed among us, but only to present to you the question which engages us, first under the theoretical, and then under the historical aspect, in reminding you of what was the first inroad made into Geneva, by the errors which engage us now, three centuries ago.

At the same time, it is so important, in my eyes, to preserve the liberty of every one upon the subject in question, that I repeat what has already been often said, that the discourse of the President is entirely his own, and that the opinion and the responsibility of the Committee are found only in the Reports of the different Sections.

I. There are difficulties in the doctrine of inspiration, and each should here respect the individual liberty of his brethren. How did God act upon the agents whom he employed to communicate with man? Did he always influence them precisely in the same manner? What are the means which enabled these agents to distinguish their own movements from the movements of the divine Spirit? We may differ upon these questions, and upon many others. Regarding them, we may even have no fixed opinion. But there is a simple and significant fact, a fact of sovereign importance, which must be admitted by every evangelical

Christian ; it is, that “ all Scripture is given by inspiration of God.” Πᾶσα γραφὴ θεοπνευστός.*

There is in the written revelation, which is the Bible, as in the living revelation, which is Jesus Christ, two natures, two *agents*—God and man. We must overlook neither the one nor the other. There is an Emmanuel, *God with us*, for the Bible as for the Saviour.

Yes, there is *man* in the Bible. It was neither a trumpet, nor a voice, nor a pen, nor a hand, that God employed to impart to us the knowledge of salvation : it was souls, wills, hearts. The sacred writers were not passive instruments, like Balaam and Caiaphas,—they were living, acting organs, imprinting upon their writings the seal of their own individuality.

But there is also *God* in the Bible. If the teaching which is found there were not that of God himself, would not the existence of sin in man have prevented the sacred writers from transmitting the truth to us pure, and without alloy ? Would not the result to us have been doubt, perplexity, unbelief ? Would not revelation thus have failed in its object ?

And not only did the divine Spirit inspire the sacred writers with the doctrines—the sentiments ; he supplied, moreover, the right expression—the words. There are no ideas without words. If the Holy Spirit did not give the words, it would have been possible for man, when left to his natural powers, to employ language which would not have conveyed his idea. When you send a message to a friend, although it relate only to an invitation, and the hour at which you expect him, you prefer not to intrust it verbally to your servant, for fear

* 2 Tim. iii. 16. ·

of error upon his part, and you give him the message in a letter written by your hand. And will God not do for eternal salvation what man does for a feast ?

But we may here point out a distinction between two systems—the one, maintained in Germany in the seventeenth century, adhered especially to the inspiration of the words, and thence deduced that of the things ; and the other, adhering especially to the inspiration of things, thence deduced that of the words as a necessary consequence. It is this last system which I maintain.

But though I maintain the inspiration of the words, not for the letter, but in as far as is necessary for that of the meaning,* I believe also in the inspiration of all the parts of Scripture. There is very little that is rational in that labour which seeks to distinguish what is inspired in the Bible from what is not. And what, in that case, must we exclude from the Bible ? Shall it be the law, as being a dispensation of the letter ? But, without speaking of all its other designs, is not the law also *prophetic*? Does it not, consequently, come from the Spirit ?

Or, would some one rather wish to distinguish between doctrine and history ? But is the history of the Bible aught but a revelation of the designs and the salvation of God ? And is not the manifestation of God in the flesh by Jesus Christ at one time history and at another doctrine—or now doctrine and then history ?

But let us approach nearer to what forms the subject of the present discussion.

The thing essential for man is, to know the salvation

* “Non pour la lettre, mais en tant que nécessaire à celle du sens.”

of God. What are the means by which he shall arrive at that result?

These means may be *within* man, or *without* and *above* man. This was the distinction which Luther made, when he said, “It is not on the rock of the Word of God, it is on the sand of man’s reason, that the church of the Pope reposes.”

The evangelical church makes Christian knowledge rest upon a principle found without and above us—in a holy and infallible Scripture. According to all the theologians, there are two essential principles of Christianity : 1st, justification by a living faith in Christ, and, 2^{dly}, submission to the sovereign authority of the Scriptures. Moreover, a German doctor of our day, Professor Müller of Halle, says—“He who does not acknowledge the doctrine of justification by faith, and the authority of the Bible, renounces the Protestant Church.”

But, if we reject the Bible as a divine authority—as the testimony which supplies us with Christian knowledge, and upon which faith reposes—what shall we thereafter substitute in its place?

Four schools are here presented; and, discarding the Scripture which the evangelical church puts forward, each school has substituted for it another source of truth.

First come the *Mystics*, the most extravagant of whom declare that the reign of the Spirit and that of the letter are two hostile and incompatible reigns; that truth is derived from internal illumination, independent of Scripture; and that, when man is confronted with the Bible, he possesses within him a principle of spiritual discernment, which teaches what he must receive and what he must reject.

There is reason to fear, from our poor nature, that, in this spiritual selection, each one will leave out of the Bible precisely the thing which, according to the will of God, he ought above all to take. Men would run the same risk in that case, as if we were to present medicines and sweetmeats to a sick child, and say to him, “ My child, make the selection according to the principle which you have within you.”

After this first school, I only indicate the other three:—The *Rationalist*, which substitutes *Reason* for the Bible; the *Catholic*, which counts some adherents even in the Protestant Churches, and which substitutes *Tradition* for it; and, finally, the *Papistical*, which substitutes *the Infallibility of the Pope*. All these errors run into each other. The mystic school merges easily into rationalism and traditionalism. Mystical upon theory, it easily becomes rationalistic in practice, by the audacity with which it sometimes treats the Bible.

The mystic school passes easily, also, into tradition. A celebrated German contemporary theologian, Twesten, when combating the views which we ourselves oppose, says, “ Were inspiration nothing but a certain religious genius, should we not commend the Catholics who put the writings of the fathers of the church—of a St Augustine, a St Bernard, a St Thomas Aquinas—side by side with the Bible, since we certainly cannot deny them the religious genius ? ” * Thus speaks Twesten; and, in truth, those whom he opposes, the mystico-rationalists, cheerfully concede to some human writings—for example, to the Epistle of Barnabas—the same weight as to Holy Scripture.

* Twesten, Dogm. i., p. 423.

Mysticism and rationalism thus conduct us to catholicism.

It is with the mystical view, mingled with a portion of rationalism, and with a smaller share of traditionalism, that we have chiefly at present to do.

But will some one say—Have not doctors and believers reason on their side, when they rise up against the *letter*? Is not the action of the Holy Spirit that work which is important and *par excellence* in Christianity? Yes, gentlemen, but it is also very important to place matters in the order which God appoints. It is not necessary to introduce strange terms in order to create great heresies,—it is enough if we change the order of the terms which God has appointed. For example, how did the Papacy arrive at its grand heresy, that of salvation by works? It introduced nothing new. It finds two words in the gospel—*salvation*—*works*—which designate two most necessary things, and is contented with inverting their order. It puts the first term in the second place, and the second term in the first. While the gospel says, “First, *salvation*, and then *works* as a consequence of *salvation*”—Rome says, “First, *works*, and then *salvation* as a consequence of *works*.” This is nothing, she will tell us, but a very slight change in the order of the words which we employ. Yes; but that slight change produces an immense heresy which destroys souls, and which overthrows, so to speak, both heaven and earth.

It is the same in the question which engages us now. The written Word and the Holy Spirit—behold the two terms—the two organs by which God communicates the truth which saves. But what is the relation be-

tween that Word and that Spirit, according to the Bible, and the evangelical churches ?

I prefer not to indicate that relation myself, but to have recourse to other theologians for that ; and I will give the preference to the most liberal of those who are represented (unjustly no doubt) as the partizans of the opinion which I oppose.

The first whom I shall cite shall be Dr Nitzsch, at present professor at Berlin. Mark what we read in his Dogmatics, under the article entitled "The Word of God and the Spirit :—" "The gift of the Spirit himself is linked to the Word of God which precedes it. That relation never terminates, so that Christian knowledge can never be based upon a foundation purely internal, and for each man to appeal to the inner light in contempt of the external word, infallibly ends in senseless enthusiasm—in baseless extravagance."

I have quoted Dr Nitzsch to you the more willingly, because he, along with Dr Müller, whom I have already named, and the learned Neander, is the founder of a new "Journal Allemand de la foi, et de la vie Chretienne"—which, it is said, seeks to modify the received doctrines regarding Scripture. "Every action of the Holy Spirit," says Twesten, also, in his Dogmatics, "has for its condition, for its instrument, the Word of God in Scripture."

It was that opinion, gentlemen, which was established from the earliest times of the Reformation. Luther calls those who say that the Scripture is *a dead letter*, and who boast only of the Spirit, *tolle geister, rotten geister*, that is to say, fools and blunderers. "The letter," he says, "does not give life by itself, but it should be pre-

sent, in order that the Holy Spirit may act by it upon the heart." If men speak of a Spirit whom they do not receive through the written Word, it is not the good Spirit—it is the devil come bodily from hell.* I assert, with the firmest conviction, that not one enlightened theologian, even in Germany, will stumble upon this point.

Müller, Neander, Nitzsch, Tholuck, have too much knowledge and good sense to fall into this *baseless extravagance*, as one of them stigmatizes it. Some of their disciples may go farther than they, and that deserves all their attention; but never will the masters adhere to that divorce which some proclaim between the Spirit and the Scripture. Some *shades* separate our opinion from that of the theologians of whom I speak; but between them and the opinion which we oppose, there is, or I am much deceived, an abyss.

Let us observe that it is necessary to distinguish two schools among the mystics.

The one—the most moderate—which I will call the mystico-christian, recognises the Scripture as inspired by God, but admits the Holy Spirit only as instructing us independently of Scripture; that was the opinion of the Quaker Barclay. That error is accompanied by numerous dangers; but those who hold it, we must acknowledge, still possess the Word and the Spirit.

The second school—the most extreme—and which I will call the mystico-rationalist, does not acknowledge the inspiration of Scripture—does not see in this doctrine anything but a *cabalistic ventriloquism*, and wishes simply to substitute for it *the noble accents of the human voice*.

* "Sondern der leydige teufel aus der høelle."—L. Opp. viii. 1176.

I wish there were some exceptions to the rule ; but I fear that it must be said, in a general discussion, that the disciples of this school have neither the *Word* which they reject, nor the *Spirit* which they claim ; for you have heard that the one is knit to the other, and in rejecting the one we lose the other.

Yes, gentlemen, there is one faith in the Holy Scripture. The church reposes upon the living conviction of Christians, that the same voice of God which gave the word and the lessons of the apostles in evangelical times, gave the Scriptures also then, and gave them sufficient, perfect, infallible, to exhibit clearly and surely in every age the unchangeable will of God. This firm reliance on the Holy Scriptures is a grace of the Holy Spirit, and the mother of all the graces. He who loses it loses one gift of God, and is in danger of losing all the rest.

You deceive yourselves, inexperienced persons who adhere to the new system will no doubt say, we lose nothing. On the contrary, the doctrine which we receive is a new sun which has arisen upon the world—a second reformation—a new era of light, of liberty, and life—a means of satisfying those who long for a true catholicity, and of leading, as a happy termination, to the union of all Christians.

These pretensions, gentlemen, are not new. Already have the mystics of the middle ages announced, that after the dispensation of the *Father*—the Old Testament—the dispensation of the *Son*—the New, they themselves were about to commence the dispensation of the *Spirit*. At other times they said, that after the period of Paul, then of James, they were about to enter into

the period of John; and the fantastic Swedenborg, who is connected with the doctrines which we combat, announced, in 1770, "the new church, the spiritual completion of the Christian church, to form the new Jerusalem."

By causing these *ignes fatui* to blaze, men have at all times infallibly allured generous but imprudent youth into concealed and perilous marshes. It is important, therefore, to weigh the value of that pretence.

There is, in the Course of Ecclesiastical History, by Dr Neander, a reflection which has always struck me—not by its novelty—it is so evident, that many others have made it both before and after him—but by its truth and its importance. Speaking of the different uses of church history, the Doctor remarks, that it enables us to discover the dangers with which we may be menaced, by presenting to us an account of similar dangers felt in former ages. "Human nature," he says, "as to its errors, is the same at all times. History consequently furnishes the best means of resisting, in the most profitable manner, the sources of evil which may appear in the church in our own day, for it shows us that the same causes have opposed the influence of true Christianity in all ages."*

This remark of Neander is essentially the same as that of Solomon, "There is nothing new under the sun." I have thought, then, that it might be useful to present you here with a short chapter of history. We know the nature of the opinion which has appeared amongst us, though we do not yet know the part which it may act in the church. But we may know it by con-

* M S. Course of Dr Neander, at the University of Berlin.

sidering the same opinion as it appeared in former ages. This new sun, this reforming system, is nothing, we must certainly say, but some old notions revived, and these among the least valuable of all that history supplies. We have here, then, a rule of three ; there is one term which we do not know, but there are three which we do know ; and you are aware, that with three known terms we can determine, with perfect exactness, the fourth, or the unknown.

In order, then, to try the experiment indicated by Neander, I desire to explore our annals for three centuries back, to see who were the first doctors in Geneva who substituted for the authority of God in Scripture the individual authority of man, giving it the name of the Holy Spirit.* Allow me to present to you, as an offering of welcome to our Geneva of 1850, a picture of Geneva in 1550, a little earlier and a little later.

II. History, by the representation of the errors of past ages, fortifies us against those of the present ; but it opposes those who labour to discover a tendency to characterize individuals in a serious work which has no other object but to characterize errors. After having reminded you of that, I enter on our subject.

It is three centuries since a great agitation was observed in the “theological city.” Two sprightly pens, which have declared more or less in favour of the anti-scriptural system which we oppose, have lately designated our city by that name, with a shade of malice, for which we pardon them with all our heart.

* “L'autorité individuelle de l'homme, en lui donnant le nom de Saint-Esprit.”

May it please God that Geneva shall more completely merit the name of the “theological city,” for theology is that which speaks of God. Three centuries ago, then, as in our day, there was a great commotion in the theological city, and the following was the cause:—

In 1540, Calvin had known at Strasburg a young *savant*, named Chatillon, who was then twenty-five years of age. Being eager to assemble enlightened men in Geneva, he invited that professor thither, as all our annals tell. Chatillon was endowed with remarkable talents, with diversified acquirements, with lively feelings, and a mind strongly enamoured of liberty. His conduct was irreproachable, and he had something interesting in his whole bearing. “Faveo ingenio et doctrinæ,” said Calvin concerning him. “I love his genius and learning.” But the reformer soon perceived that the learned Hellenist wanted judgment, and that he was immoderately self-confident.* Theodore Beza gave him, in consequence, the Greek name of *Iδιογνωμών*, as if he would call him an individualist *par excellence*, a man who does not receive the light which comes from without—for example, through the Scriptures of God—but who luxuriates in his own peculiar opinions. To that he added some imprudence and little tact with his opponents; provided that he struck hard, it was of little importance whether he struck justly. “His writings,” says a biographer of Calvin, “were characterized by logic the most penetrating, and a genius the most keen. The celebrated historian Schlosser calls him ‘the learned but the unfortunate, the proud and the troublesome Se-

* “Velle illud conjunctum esse cum meliore judicio.” “Illam immodicam confidentiam.”—Calv. Epp. Anno 1544.

bastian," as that was his name by baptism. Another historian, P. Henry, says that he was "ganz was die franzosen," or exactly what the French call "une mauvaise tête." Though he came from Strasburg, he was not born there; he came from France, to which Strasburg did not then belong. He commonly took the Latin name of Castellio or Castalio. At Geneva he devoted himself to exegetical labours; and he subsequently published, in 1551, a new translation of the Bible, with notes, which he dedicated to Edward VI., the king of England.

Criticism domineered over faith in Chatillon; he denied the authority of Scripture. "The Word," said he, "is not sufficient to decide religious controversies (*neque verbum sufficiens*). We need a more perfect revelation (*ampliorem revelationem*)."^{*} He separated Scripture from the Spirit, and, according to him, the Spirit could enlighten man without the Scripture. He thought that the aspect of every thing would be changed in the train of the revolution which he demanded—for it was a revolution which he wished to produce. "The Spirit," said he, "will eclipse the light of Scripture, as day eclipses the light of a lamp—*Spiritus splendore suo Scripturæ lucem obscurabit*."^{*} "There was from the beginning," says a Swiss historian, "a mystical element in the character of Chatillon; and if he did not fall into fantastic reveries, it was mainly owing to his very profound classical acquirements."[†]

To these mystical tendencies the young *savant* added

* Castellio Præfat. Bibl. *Defensio suæ translationis.* Beræ Annotat. et Resp.

† Trechsel i. 213.

some which were rationalistic; he displayed great exegetical boldness, especially for that period, and fearlessly withdrew any work from the Sacred Collection—he did that with the Song of Songs, to the great scandal of Calvin.

Calvin, Theodore Beza, and the other Genevese divines, combated these adventurous doctrines. Chatillon having then, as it appears, cast away all reserve, attacked his opponents in a congregation assembled upon a Thursday, after which he demitted his office, and quitted Geneva. Calvin and his colleagues, however, adopted gentle measures regarding him. “He is ambitious and quarrelsome,” wrote Calvin to Viret, on the 26th of March 1544, “but I esteem his learning, and also his character, which is not bad in the main.” Calvin gave him a testimonial, in which he declared, that though Chatillon quitted them, it was neither for any fault in his life, nor any impious doctrine; he explained the points of their final disagreement, and added, “We have conjured him not needlessly to attribute any thing to his sentence more than is just, especially seeing that in all the matters alleged to be novel which he proposed (especially upon the canon of the Old Testament), there was nothing which was not known, and more than known, a very long time before he was born.” Chatillon retired to Basle, where he became professor of Greek, in 1553. He sank more and more into mysticism, and published divers works of the mediæval mystics. He had the honour of being one of the most ardent defenders of religious liberty of his age.

Such was the first, though feeble, blow given in Geneva to the authority of the Scriptures inspired by God. That divine authority is the foundation upon

which the faith and the morality of the Christian repose. The evangelical Christian believes a truth because it is written in the oracles of God ; he performs a work because it is commanded there. If, then, you destroy that foundation, it is natural to conclude that you will thereby destroy the very faith and morality which there found their support. Chatillon was contented with attacking the foundation, without laying his hand upon the structure ; but let us see if that structure will endure long after him.

Chatillon had not yet quitted Geneva, when a man who had delighted all Italy was seen arriving there—it was the general of the Capuchins, Bernardino Ochino—whose eloquence had moved the large towns of his native country. At Geneva, he became the friend of Chatillon ; and the Little Council having quickly allotted a chapel to the Italian Protestants, near the cathedral of St Peter, the celebrated transalpine preacher was heard in our city. At the same time, there were some who soon discovered in his discourses—so clear and so lively, or even, in general, so evangelical—some germs of an ultra-individualist, and an ultra-spiritualist character. “The Holy Spirit,” said the great orator, “enlightens believers immediately, and independently of the Word of God in the Holy Scripture.” He went even farther ; and once, when preaching on the means of knowing divine inspirations, and of following them, he said—“Thus, then, it is the Spirit of God who should be our rule, and it is necessary to be more prompt in obeying him than all men and angels, than our own wisdom, and even than the words of Christ—(*Imo e che alle parole di Christo*),” Let us here notice one of the

greatest dangers of the system which we oppose. If it be not in Scripture, but in ourselves, that we must seek the standard of truth and of holiness, what will happen? While it is religion which should mould our sinful heart, our sinful heart will mould religion, and we shall then hold a paganism perhaps more fine, but as dangerous as that which the polluted heart of man produced in ancient times. Whenever we cease to hold that Scripture is the fountain of religion, we see this remark of the philosopher Jacobi fulfilled—"In all ages the religion of man has been according to his moral condition;" and this other remark, profane, but very true (it is by Voltaire)—"God created man in his own image, and man has reciprocated the favour." According to that fatal system, there is no longer either pure religion or pure morality. When man is left to judge of what is right, he always finds that what he desires is right; there no longer exists a sin which has not an excuse, and that excuse men impute to the Holy Spirit. Of that, the eloquent Ochino furnished a memorable example in the sixteenth century. Not merely did he speedily fall into melancholy errors in doctrine—in particular, regarding the divinity of the Saviour—but, moreover, according to him it was enough to have an inward light urging us to do a thing, and then that thing was right. "Good Christians alone," he said one day, in one of his sermons, "and those who have a living light from God, can, without sinning, take up arms to attack their neighbour, when they have been inspired by God to do so—(*Offender li prossimi loro, quando a cio fusseno inspirati da Dio*)."

Poor Ochino, having declined the authority of the

Bible, went even farther still, and so opposed the Spirit to the Word of God, that he almost said that Scripture and the Spirit are reciprocally exclusive. He boldly declared that it was necessary to obey the inspirations of the Holy Spirit, even when they were contrary to Scripture. Mark what we read in his catechism (these writings are found in our public library). The minister says, "You believe, then, that the midwives of Egypt sinned in lying?" The illuminated (*illuminato* is the word which he employs) replies, "Certainly, for God had not inspired them to lie. Rahab," he continues, "was either inspired to lie, or she sinned—(*O fu inspirata a mentire, o peccò*)."¹ Falsehood is not the only sin which is thus rendered legitimate. We read in the same catechism, "And if any one be inspired by God to commit suicide?" The illuminated replies, "He would not sin (*non pecherebbe*), as Samson did not sin." In every age, we have seen carnal mystics who abandoned themselves to actions the most disorderly, because, during these debaucheries, they said, the Spirit dwelt in them. The error which we combat flows from the fall, and is the mother of all error, and of all moral disorder.

Ochino quitted Geneva, and went to Basle to his friend Chatillon.

Chatillon was the first round of the ladder, Ochino was the second ; that distinguished man, estimable still, in many respects, had already greatly injured both faith and morality. But let us courageously descend the steps of that dangerous ladder—it plunges into a frightful abyss.

About two years after Ochino had quitted Geneva,

in 1548, a much more important personage arrived there—a lawyer of Sienna, Lelius Socinus. “He was of a dark and secretive cast of mind,” says an historian, “and associated with the most important personages.” Many acts of kindness were done to him by the Protestants, because it was hoped that he would be useful in promoting the Reformation of Italy. By degrees he waxed bolder. “After having long concealed his poison,” says Calvin, “he vomited it forth among us.” The Socini (Lelius, and his nephew, Faustus) were in doubt as to the inspiration of the Scriptures. Sometimes it appeared real to them, as emanating from an extraordinary influence of the Holy Spirit; at other times, it was nothing but that of men who have the Holy Spirit, as every believer has a right to expect, and is bound to desire, Him. In general, none of the doctors of the sixteenth century went so far as some doctors in our day; none of them was content to hear in the Scriptures only the noble sounds of the human voice. At the same time, the Socinians approached near to these modern errors. If it was still necessary to believe the sacred writers, it was only, according to the Socinians, because they were holy men, and illustrious Christians, who had actually seen the things of which they speak. They found contradictions and errors in the historical parts of the Scriptures. Above all, they set aside their authority; instead of being objective in the Bible, it was, according to them, subjective in the Christian: the individual had the first place. That individual was not bound to submit to a truth, unless he found something in himself which corresponded to that truth, and confirmed it. It was

then that men saw that great work of demolition hastening on which these subversive principles could not but accomplish in Christian doctrine. Before the theories advanced by Chatillon, Ochino, and Socinus, no doctrine could survive. The subjective experience of Socinus rejects the doctrine of expiation, even although, says he, it be found every where attested by language the most express (*ubique clarissimis verbis testatum*). That subjective experience in the same way rejects the divinity of the Son. “What do you answer to the testimonies by which it is proved that the Son is of the same essence as the Father?” they say in the Socinian Catechism. The reply is, “Before examining these different testimonies, we must know beforehand that that generation from the essence of the Father is impossible.” Thus, even before reading and examining Scripture, individualism, the enemy of inspiration, fortifies itself against it by infidelity. You know, gentlemen, all the desolations, the errors, the heresies which have sprung from that subjectivity of the Socini. Wherever it has prevailed, the church has been agitated, impoverished, withered, destroyed.

That wind, which was then felt in some degree every where, and whose tendency was to overthrow the Scriptures of God, after having blown upon Geneva from France, Germany,* and Italy, arrived there also from Spain. There came thither, in 1553, a man who concealed profound rationalistic tendencies under spiritual appearances, and a style which was metaphysical, mystical, and obscure, in which he was distinguished from the Socini, who were more inclined to pure rationalism.

* J. Denck, J. Hetzer, &c.

This new doctor, whose name was Michael Servetus, had escaped from the archiepiscopal prisons of Vienne in Dauphiné, where he was burned in effigy, because they could not burn him in person, on the 17th of June 1553. He arrived at Geneva towards the middle of July, designing, if he could, to overthrow Calvin, and to accomplish at Geneva what he called the restoration of the true Christianity (*restitutio Christianismi*). He attacked the authority and necessity of the Holy Scriptures, and pretended that, in the train of the emancipation which he projected, the Holy Spirit would resume in the church the place which belongs to Him. “The true church of Christ,” said he,* “can exist without the Scriptures. Preaching, interpretation, the living voice of the church, is worth more than dead Scripture (*vox viva praefertur Scripturæ mortuæ*).” “The doctrine of Christ,” said he, farther, “is entirely spiritual—are we not ashamed, then, thus to appeal to a letter which kills (*æquæ vocare litteram occidentem*) ?”

Servetus, quite captivated with himself, and imagining that he was the restorer of Christianity, set himself above the Romish and the Protestant Churches, and for the system of these two he substituted a third, his own, which, according to him, combined in itself all that remained of truth in the two other churches, while entirely avoiding their errors. He inveighed strongly against orthodoxy, pretending that it was only a kind of intellectualism. “Faith,” said he, “is a confiding not an understanding; it is a living energy (*vivens energia*), a continuous action (*actio continua*).” He concealed these deleterious doctrines by language which was in appear-

* *Christianismi Restitutio*, p. 627, &c.

ance spiritual, and which blinded the eyes of the simple. In attacking a dogmatic Christianity, he presented himself as the advocate of the voice within. He spoke much of emanations, and wished the ideal of Christ to be impressed upon our whole nature. "By faith," said he, "Christ takes a form in us; his essential likeness, his true idea, his luminous form is impressed upon our soul (*veram in nobis imprimit ideam Filii*)."^{*} Peter, in his second epistle, had already demanded more—he had said that Christians are "partakers of the divine nature;" but it was according to him by the "great and precious promises" of the Word that that participation was bestowed. In spite of all his pretensions to a lofty spirituality, it is manifest to all who have read the writings of Servetus, that as always happens when respect for the testimony of God is wanting, faith was for him essentially a theoretic trust—it was philosophic ideas covered over by a spurious spirituality. You know the fatal errors which that pretended restorer of Christianity spread. What characterized him was not merely a restless spirit, a mystical tendency, and an obscure style of language, but it was chiefly the use of shocking, startling, daring words, which even his friends condemned—it was thus that he called the holy Trinity of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, a three-headed Cerberus. The Genevese government, having consulted those of Berne, of Zurich, of Basle, and Schaffhausen, concluded that if it trifled with a heretic condemned to the flames by Papists, it would justify the accusations of heresy urged by them against the Reformation; and after Calvin had interceded in vain for a mitigated punishment, Servetus

* *De Fide et Justitia*, p. 300.

was burned to death. That death is a stain, a remnant of Popery, in our history.

But the “theological city” did not yet find repose. It had still one step to take:—Socinus and Servetus had developed the results of Chatillon’s principles as to faith—others were now charged to exhibit their effects upon morality. For a long time, an active party was busy in Geneva, and had secured the favour even of some of its most influential men. One named Coppin, of Yssel in Flanders, may be regarded as the chief of that sect. By fair words and spiritual discourses, he had won many pious persons of rank in Belgium and France. Gruet, who lived at Bourg-de-Four, was one of his principal leaders in Geneva. The doctrine which we oppose, and which denies the authority of Scripture in the sphere of religion, stands in natural connection with the doctrines which deny the authority of the magistrate and of the law, in the sphere of politics. It was upon that relation between the political and the religious sphere that the new sect took hold. It proposed to establish a spurious liberty—that is to say, a horrible disorder in politics, religion, and morality; and for that purpose, it professed principles similar to those of Chatillon. Listen to the doctrines which these men then published in our city:—

“We should not be subjected to the letter which *kills* (*qui tue*), but should follow the Spirit who makes alive. Scripture, taken in its natural sense, is only a dead letter which kills, and therefore we must abandon it for the vivifying Spirit. Let no one stop at *what is written*, to acquiesce in it at all; but let him speculate more loftily, and search for new revelations.”* These

* Opuscules de Calvin.—Contre les Libertins, chap. ix.

doctors would have chosen, then, in the Scriptures what they were pleased to take or to reject, what they found true or false, historical or fabulous. In discussion, they were distinguished by a scoffing spirit, combined with high presumption, and strove to make their hearers laugh at the expense of their opponents. Their sarcastic spirit, which they pretended was the divine Spirit, went farther still, and did not spare even the apostles. They called Paul, *Pot cassé*; Peter, *Renonceur de Jesus*; John, *Jouvenceau* and *Follet*; Matthew, *Usurier*. They pretended to know more about religion than the sacred writers themselves; they corrected them in many things, and adopting the spirit of the age, which loved to injure, they sometimes even called them *Coquins* and *Marauds*. They called themselves the *Spiritual*, because they pretended, above all, to establish the reign of the Spirit;—they were called by others the *Libertines*.

The spiritual man, they said (that is to say, he who takes for the rule of his conduct not the Scripture but the Spirit), has become like Adam before the fall; he knows nothing more of sin—he is free from all law—he has no need to make conscience of any thing, for it is the Spirit who impels him; his desires and his doings are the desires and the doings of God. Every thing is lawful for him, if only he permit himself to be guided by the Spirit who is in him. There is no longer any kind of restraint for the spiritual man; even marriage does not bind him; he can, and he should, form spiritual marriages with those whom the Spirit desires he should so marry, and that for as long a period as the Spirit wishes.* In consequence of these principles, the

* *Opuscules de Calvin.—Contre les Libertins, chap. xiii. to xx.*

wife of one of the members of the Little Council of Geneva, Madam Benedict Ameaux, formed a spiritual marriage with a libertine. She excused herself by saying that, if that was contrary to Scripture, it was agreeable to the Spirit, who had impelled her to it. She was separated from her husband; then condemned to perpetual imprisonment; and, afterwards, at the request of her relatives, set free as a fool.

Such was the spirit of darkness which had crept into the Reformation, in the train of all these false teachers. The Papacy was less to be dreaded. Under the veil of pious spiritualism, under the appearance of a new and more perfect doctrine, a spirit of confusion and disorder struggled to take weak minds captive. The excellent sister of Francis I., the most enlightened woman of her age, Margaret of Valois, indoctrinated by Pocquet, yielded to it for a time. A letter from Calvin re-established her. The enemy had come and copiously sown tares among the good seed.

Calvin could not slumber. He arose and inflicted some blows upon the spurious spirituality of his time, which fall upon that of all ages—even upon that degree which was held by Chatillon and Servetus, without plunging them into immorality. “Although this sect,” says the Reformer, “may be very different from that of the Papists—let it even be a hundred times worse and more pernicious—both of them have, nevertheless, this principle in common—to transform Scripture into an allegory, and pretend to a better and more perfect wisdom than we find there.”

“Both of them,” continued Calvin, “both of them, by common consent, take for a pretext this sentence

of St Paul, ‘The letter kills, but the Spirit makes alive.’” Calvin then explains the meaning of that passage, which, you know, is often quoted in our days,—“The apostle, in that passage,” he says, “compares the law, detached from Jesus Christ, with the gospel. He calls the law *the letter*; because, without the grace of God, it is cold and ineffectual, especially when it does not penetrate into the heart. On the other hand, he calls the gospel *spiritual doctrine*, because Jesus Christ is embraced in it, who gives life to the Word, making it profit our souls by his Spirit. The law while continuing thus literal kills,” he continued, “since we can find in it nothing but condemnation. But the gospel quickens, because it conveys to us the grace of Jesus Christ, by which it is rendered fruitful unto salvation. That is the simple meaning of St Paul, who thus teaches us that we must not separate the Word of God from Jesus Christ, who is its soul. What do these good expositors wish from us then? They wish us, by means of this passage, to make Scripture a nose of wax, or to toss it like a ball. It is more than certain that Paul never thought of that. Let them cease, then, to produce such a witness to help their cause.”

“Their second design,” continues our Reformer, “is still more diabolical. They try to drag us beyond the limits of the Scriptures, in order that each one may follow his own dreams and the illusions of the devil, instead of the truth of God. If God has promised us his Spirit, it is not in order that, by forsaking the Scripture, we may be led away from that Spirit, and walk among the clouds, but that we may possess the true knowledge of that Scripture, and so satisfy ourselves therewith.”

“The libertines could not introduce a subject in which the word *spirit* was not immediately thrust forward”—(it is still Calvin who speaks). “They apply the name spirit wherever it appears good to them. As the curates of villages sometimes make one grotesque figure in their parish serve for five or six saints, so that it represents now one and then another, that they may receive a greater number of offerings, the libertines act in the same way regarding the word spirit ; it is a sauce common to all their viands. Farther, we should notice that, in thus promiscuously applying the word spirit to all that enters their head, not only do they perplex the understanding of their hearers, by confounding things which should be kept distinct, but, moreover, they deceive them by making them believe that they are quite spiritual and divine, and that they are half-seraphic like the angels. If, then, some man of considerable zeal falls into the hands of these heroes, when he hears them speak of nothing but *spirit*, saying that the word of God is nothing but *spirit*, and that Jesus Christ in like manner is *spirit*, and that we must be *spirit* along with him, and that our life should be *spirit*, it will appear to him at the first glance that these are admirable zealots, who are grieved to see the Word of God so distorted and dishonoured by the wicked life of false Christians. Being thus honied over, he will form a good opinion of them, which will induce him to love and trust them. But, afterwards, they begin to disgorge their poison, and fall from these swelling words, as St Jude says, to their sensual doctrine. What, then, some one will say,—Should the name *spirit* for all this be suspected ? Let it never occur to me to think so.

But it becomes us to be prudent to discover to what use it is put. If, then, we perceive a man employing it honestly, and showing that the Word of God is spiritual, with a view to mould our hearts to faith and a holy life—if, while repressing the vanity of those who hold the Word of God only upon the tongue, he warn them of the necessity of adopting a different course—let him be cordially listened to. But if we hear any one speaking ambiguously, we should terminate the affair by asking what he means to express. If he perseveres in his ambiguities, and coils up his words like a serpent's tail, let him then be dragged into daylight, whatever he may say, as if we were dragging a robber or a criminal from his den. Every one knows how, and by what title, these people have acquired the name of *spiritual*; by which they are so much inflated, that the name of Christian is of no value among them.

"To avoid such trouble," added the Reformer, "let us desire to possess nothing but what God has been pleased to reveal in his Scripture. Let us not subject the sacred Word of God, either to our sense, or to our concupiscence, but rather let us unreservedly submit to what it teaches. Let us not covet novelties, nor have itching ears, so as to be devoted to what is curious, but let us seek what is for our profit and edification. Being directed to the true way, let us walk there—having the truth of God, let us adhere firmly to it. Farther, let no one marvel or be troubled when he sees such strange and exorbitant errors of all kinds. Let no one take occasion from that to give way or resile from the gospel. On the contrary, let us try to fortify ourselves by it, so that it may prove to us a support, at once perpetual, sure, and

faithful, to sustain us amid all the troubles and all the scandals which can come upon us.” *

Thus spoke the Reformer in Geneva. But its sectaries were strongly supported. Perrin, Vandel, Berthelier, were with them. On the 18th of May, the *Spirituals*, after a supper at which wine had heated them, undertook to attack the house of Baudichon de la Maisonneuve, where some refugees, and other Genevese friends of Calvin, were assembled. “They began,” says Bonnivard, “while supping and partaking of food, to assail the French, and their supporters, with the tongue, and after the tongue had done its duty, wine impelled the feet and the hands to do theirs.” † A tumult arose at nine o’clock in the evening, in the Place de la Fusterie. The Syndic Aubert hastened thither, with his syndical baton in his hand. The *spirituals* were seized in the very act of rebellion, condemned, and banished.—I terminate here the history of that controversy of the sixteenth century in Geneva—a controversy which I have deemed it proper to place before you. We have finished the descent of the ladder ; it is in the mire that it terminates.

A German historian, while speaking of the false *spirituals* who appeared after the Reformation, has said,—“The revival of a new principle always leads to something extravagant. When the human mind is roused by great events, it hurries forward with the same boldness which it has employed in overthrowing human idols, and easily surrenders itself to ideas which violate all order.” ‡ We need not wonder to see that happen-

* Recueil des Opuscules de Jehan Calvin, pp. 662, 663, 713, &c.

† Memoires de la Societie d’ Histoire de Geneve. T. v. P. 473.

‡ Henry. Calvin’s Leben, ii. p. 399.

ing after a revival in the nineteenth century, which took place in the sixteenth, after the Reformation. You all know the saying of Luther, who compared human nature to an intoxicated man on horseback; he falls on the one side; some one puts him right, and immediately he falls upon the other. Mark what this comparison implies. There are two spheres in religion ; the *objective*, which includes whatever is *without us*, for example, Scripture and the expiatory work of Christ ; —and the *subjective*, which comprehends what is within us—the work of the Spirit and regeneration. That religion may be true and saving, there must be an equilibrium between these two spheres ; but whenever that equilibrium is destroyed, on the one side or the other, religion is exposed to great dangers. The Reformation establishes them in a perfect harmony. But, just as the corruption of the Papacy had arisen from its being swayed to the objective side, and perverting it, the evil of the doctrines which we oppose arises from the fact, that their authors are swayed to the subjective side, and distort it. If the subjective tendency becomes exclusive, it is a sickly tendency—a fever. That sickness arises from the want of health in the individual, from his never having been converted, or, at the very least, because his conversion was not sufficiently profound. The *Me*,* which has not been sufficiently

* This language, which is, fortunately, to a great extent still unintelligible to thousands in this land, refers to certain of the doctrines of Germany, perfected, perhaps, by Hegel; according to which *the Me*, the individual man, is developed into all that is grand and elevating. God himself springs from that origin—at least all the God that is admitted by these unconscious blasphemers.

—TR.

humbled, or sufficiently crucified, starts suddenly up, and sets itself above the Scripture of God. One falls more readily into that moral malady, if he has cultivated one faculty—the understanding, for example—at the expense of the others, or if one has lived in his closet away from Christian experience, or Christian life. “Ah,” wrote one quite recently to us—a pastor, who has already had some years of experience, and who went forth from our seminary, “let our brethren, the students, enter thoroughly into the work of the ministry—let them attempt to persuade, to convince ; and then, returning from their error, if they have given ear to the new ideas, they will clearly see, that for doing good they have no more powerful weapons than the Scriptures of God.”

Gentlemen, I dread this subjective tendency for our epoch—I dread it, convinced that it cannot fail to have the same developments and the same results as it had in the sixteenth century. You have noticed the fatal progress of this opinion. Chatillon taught merely the doctrine which substitutes the authority of the individual mind for the authority of the Divine Scripture. But all seed produces fruit. This tenet, speedily embraced by Socinus and Servetus, first overthrew all the doctrines of the faith ; then, as interpreted by Coppin, Pocquet, Gruet, and the Libertines, it overthrew all the precepts of morality. It thus produced vast heresies, and a hideous confusion. The progress is terrible, but inevitable. We endeavour, therefore, clearly to prove it. If we now oppose the principles now professed among us, it is not merely to defend the authority of the inspired Word of God—that certainly were well worth our trouble—but we have other motives still. We op-

pose them because (we are convinced) what is involved in this affair is essentially Christian doctrine and Christian morality. We must repeat, that every one may understand it. *What is at stake in this affair is the Christian doctrines and Christian morality.* To ask us, then, as has been done, to admit these pernicious tenets, is to ask us not only to abandon the Holy Scriptures, but even to abandon Christianity—its faith, and its manners. As well demand our life. And if any one say to us, “Upon what do you found an opinion so narrow, so strange, so much in arrear of your age?” we reply, Upon the testimony of God and of facts. It is to make this opinion stand out, if possible, before the eyes of the most incredulous, that we have traced a chapter of the religious history of Geneva. I believe in the voice of Scripture, and I believe also in the voice of history. I must combat that of which they show me the formidable dangers. (*Ich kann nicht anders.*)

No doubt, gentlemen, the errors which we now witness in Geneva have no resemblance, in a moral point of view, any more than those of Chatillon, to those of the last category—those of the spurious *spirituals*. Some characters of an admirable purity will prevent, I am convinced, for some time longer, the fatal effects of these principles. One may even hope, considering the general progress, that the excesses will be less gross than they were three centuries ago. The human mind moves in a curve: after a certain time it returns to the point where it was found some ages before. But, like the curve of which I speak, the mind of man, in returning to the point which it has already passed, falls more and more short at each revolution which it performs. At

the same time, the consequences of the principles which we oppose are natural, and, I repeat it, inevitable. It is not necessary to go out of Switzerland to find men who deduce these consequences, and practise them at this very hour.* When man has ventured to demolish, or at least to alter, the solid dyke which God has erected against his doubts and his passions—*the Scripture*—he finds nothing else to arrest him. The scandalous disorders to which the *spirituals* in Geneva gave themselves up, precisely three centuries ago, are a solemn premonition given to the present generation. He who was pleased to permit the Ananiases, the Sapphiras, and the Nicolaitans, at the commencement of the gospel dispensation, to alarm future ages, has been pleased also to permit spiritual libertines, at the commencement of our blessed Reformation, to frighten all those who might be tempted to forget the unique and sovereign authority of what is written in the Word of God.

Some even think that the error which proposes to overthrow the authority of the Scripture of God—to substitute for it a personal authority, has more chances of success in our days, than it had in the sixteenth century. “This error,” they say, “was not in the general spirit of the sixteenth century; but it is altogether in harmony with that of ours.” I must acknowledge what is well founded in this opinion. This doctrine is in effect (to speak so) the theological complement of the false

* A pastor from the Canton of Berne spoke in the Assembly, and made known the frightful excesses (they amounted even to parricide) which have signalized, in the districts where he dwells, the substitution of a pretended individual illumination, under the name of the Holy Spirit, for the objective authority of the Holy Scriptures of God.

and fatal idea of our age, which every where substitutes independence and individual authority for submission to a higher authority. There is, then, in the decline of society, a chance for its errors.

But if the evil has grown, the good has grown along with it. If the wise fall easily into these fatal doctrines, the simple-minded and living Christians will not allow themselves to touch them ;—there are children of God, like “some organized bodies, which possess the faculty of rejecting every foreign substance by the play of life.” The living church will every where feel that these errors are contrary to her, and will repel them. They will only serve for a sieve, designed to separate that among us which has the true life, from that which has it only in appearance.

That is so true, that we have rather to fear an exaggerated reaction. Yes, gentlemen—and it is a fact which demands all your prayers—the little barque of the school, and I may say of the church, sails at present between two opposite currents. There is the current of the friends of learning, which is opposed to the Holy Scripture of God ; there is the current of the friends of the Holy Scripture of God, which is opposed to learning. On the one side, the intellectual beauty of knowledge and of talent is found ; on the other, the spiritual beauty of the interior life and of Christian activity. If it were absolutely necessary, in order to preserve one of these, to reject the other, our choice would not be dubious—we would abandon the intellectualism of the learned for the piety of the humble. But, gentlemen, we will not allow ourselves to be drawn into any extreme. We reject the learning which is made the

mistress of the Scriptures of God—but we invoke that which is made their servant. We see great miseries for the church, if we abandon the one or the other of these elements—learning, or faith. Now more than ever, a true Scriptural learning is necessary to combat subtle errors, and incessantly lead back the church to the primitive sources of life.

Understand it well—if we wish to preserve the Scriptures, it is to preserve life, doctrine, Jesus Christ himself. We have heard some people say, that, while rejecting the attacks directed against the Scriptures, they sympathized with other declarations recently come from the same pen, and believed that true sanctification consists in conformity to the image of Jesus. Is that, I ask, the point in question? Have not the children of God in all ages, who “meditate night and day on the law of the Eternal,” always sought their sanctification in conformity to the image of Jesus? No; the question is not there—but mark where it is. Must we be conformed to the image of Christ, such as the inspired Scriptures of God present it—of the true Christ—the Christ who is *always the same?* or rather, making a selection from the Scriptures, and withdrawing what does not please us, must we conform ourselves to the changing image of the Christ of our dreams, of our understanding, and our imagination? That is the question.

Gentlemen,—Christ our wisdom—Christ our righteousness—Christ our sanctification—Christ our life—Christ our hope—Christ our redemption—behold Him whom we must preserve! The enemy incessantly seeks to withdraw him. Should he even present himself as

an angel of light, “ let us resist the enemy, and he will flee from us.” The Holy Scripture alone upholds Jesus Christ, and the Spirit alone bestows him upon us through the Scripture. Oh! let us hold by Jesus Christ —and for that purpose, let us keep hold of the Scriptures by the Holy Spirit.

THE END.

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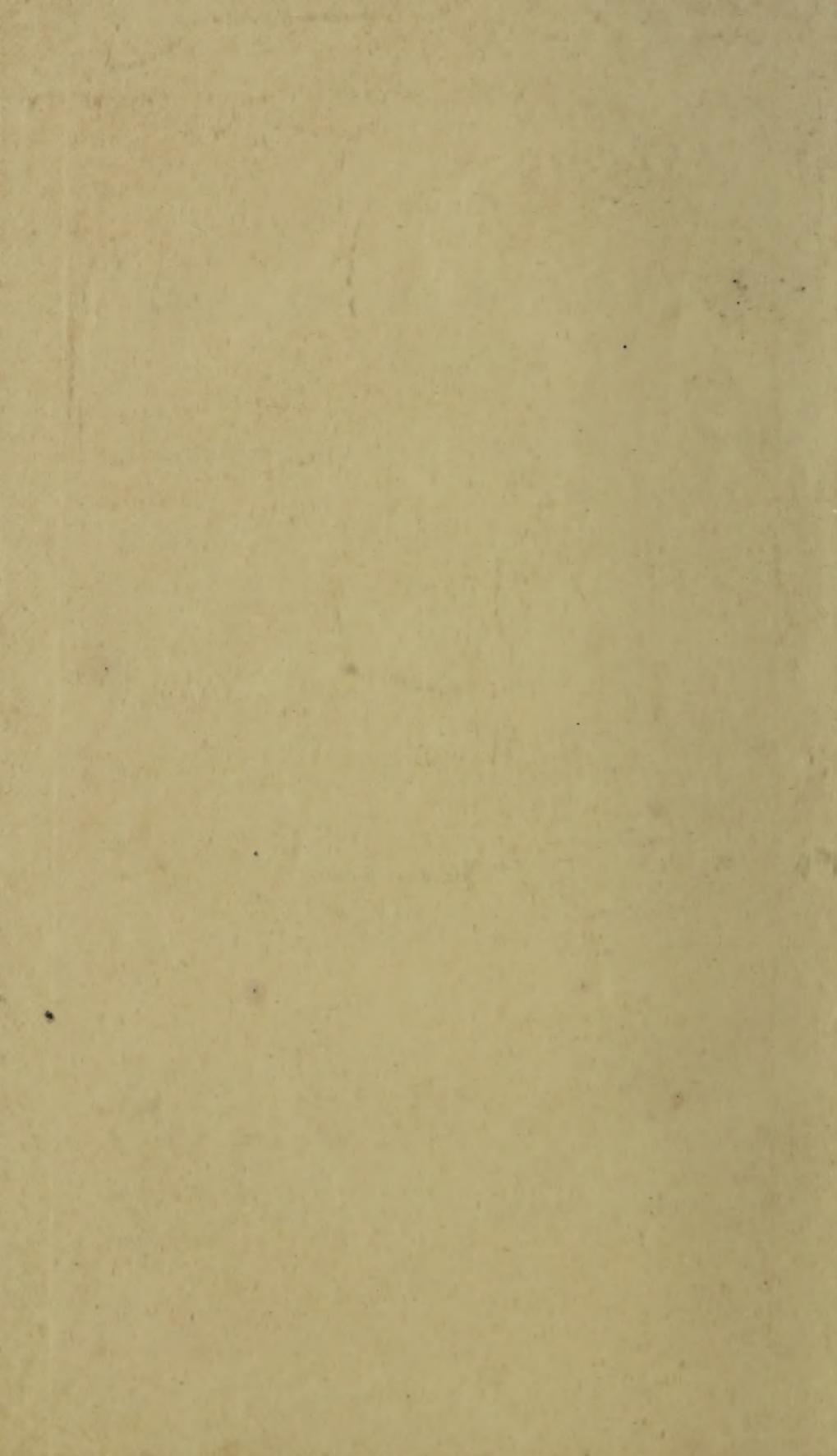
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